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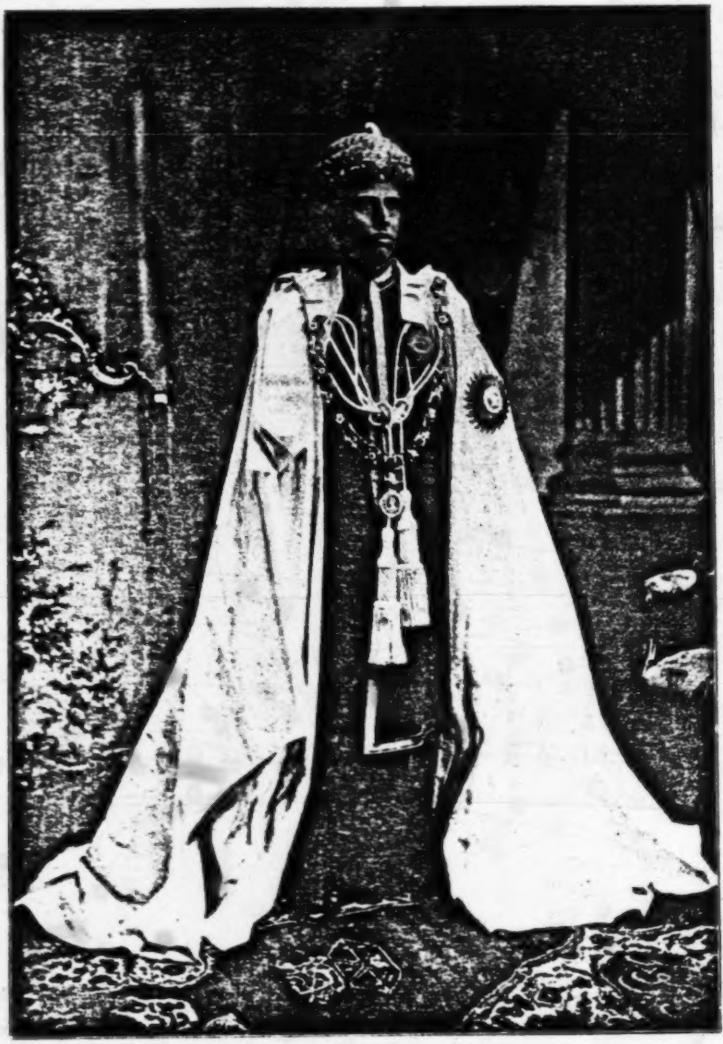

HIS HIGHNESS SIR RAMA VARMA, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., F.M.U.,
RAJA OF COCHIN.

[frontispiece]

THE

Cochin Tribes and Castes

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Volume II.

BY

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[Title Page]

CHAPTER I.

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THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

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A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS).

Introduction.

THE NAYARS are an interesting caste of people, forming a 101
considerable portion of the population of the 564
Cochin State; they constitute the third and
last of the honoured castes under the name of the pure "*Sudras of Malayala*". They were mostly nobles who engaged [554]
neither in handicraft, nor in commerce, nor in any other
occupation but that of arms, which they always carried; and
no one could be called a Nayar who was not of noble lineage.
They were in fact the magnates of the rulers of Kerala, and
exercised as much authority over their inferiors as their rulers
did over them. They formed in ancient times a warlike race with
military leaders and civil administrators of all kinds. Very much [177]
influenced as they are by modern civilisation, their customs
widely differ from those of other people, in marriage, family
and social organizations, as also in maternal filiation. These
customs, which are primitive, are being tenaciously retained by
them; and they are even now, as they have always been, a [178]
unique people whose customs may appear peculiarly strange to
foreigners.

The word *Nayar,* which is the honourific plural of *Nayan,* is derived from *Nayaka,* which means a leader of the people; and the name, which in the widest sense at present includes a large number of sub-castes quite distinct from one another, may have been given by a class of Brahmans called the Nambuthiris [1] to the Nayars proper, who formed a military class in ancient times. Some consider it to be more correct to derive *Nayars* from *Nagas* (snakes or snake-worshipping Nagas or Scythians) from the worship of the Nagas or snakes which has been the characteristic cult of the community.

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[1] See account of the Nambuthiris.

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[173] Origin and tradition of the caste.

According to ***Kerala Mahatmyam***, the Nayars are said to be the descendants of the union of the junior members of the Nambuthiri families with the Devagandarva and Rakshasa women brought in by Parasurama from extra-terrestrial regions. The ***Keralotpatti*** regards them as the descendants of the Sudras who accompanied the Brahman immigrants from outside Kerala.

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174 Some consider that the Nayars came from Tibet where polyandry prevails, while others consider them to be a very early division of the Newars of Nepal. The mere existence of polyandry in Tibet is not sufficient to suggest a racial identity, nor is the form of polyandry prevailing amongst the Nayars the same as that found amongst the Tibetans;[1] but the marital relations, mode of inheritance and other customs, as well as the style of architecture of Nepal, closely connect them with the Nayars, and go to show a common origin.[2]

101
174 In the serpent worship of the Nayars, and also their matriarchal customs, others have found traces of a Scythian origin. It is said that the Dravidian languages retain a more intimate connection with the Scythian or Turanean tongues. Philology also comes in to support this view. It is said that Tamil and its cognate tongues were founded upon the ancient Asura or Dravidian speech, and this is strongly confirmed by the fact that the language of the Brahuis, a tribe on the borders of Sind, has been found to be closely allied to them. "The Brahuis' language", says Dr. Caldwell, "enables us to trace the Dravidian race to the southern confines of Central Asia, and that this country was the home of the Nagas to which race apparently belonged the founders of the Dravidian kingdoms." It may therefore be safely concluded that the Dravidians of South India were of the same stock as the Nagas of the North, and to these tribes of Naga colonists belonged the original serpent worshipping Nayars.[3] "The name Dravidian Races," says Friedrich Ratzel, "fits only the Tamils, Telugus, and Canarese of Southern India, remoter kindred of the dark aboriginal population to whom Aryan population brought the religion of Brahma, a high civil order and of course the opportunity of extensive intermixture. The selection of the term is connected

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[1] **The Evolution of Marriage, Letourneau, page 80.**

[2] **The Sun and the Serpent, C. F. Oldham, page 158.**

[3] **The Sun and the Serpent, Chapter VII, pages 162-165.**

with its use in the sacred writings of the old Indians, where it 101
is applied to the old Kshatriyas on the east coast of the Deccan 174
who had fallen to the rank of Sudras. As a rule, however, all are called Dravidians who are not Aryan or Semitic and speak agglutinative languages like Tamil. They are distinguished by their dark colour, Mongolian features, and smooth hair. "The nucleus of the Tamil race was indeed," says Grant, "devoted to the nomad life, the fundamental institution of Turanean existence, but the hypothesis of their close connection with the population of Tibet has not attained the rank of scientific certainty."[1]

The passage, quoted above, supports the general consensus 174
of opinion, that the Malayalam language is an offshoot of Tamil, and that the Nayars are the immigrants from the Tamil country.

It has always been a matter of controversy whether Malayalam is the mother, sister, or daughter of Tamil. The popular opinion seems to be, that it is the archaic form of Tamil before it became a written language, and this corresponds with the information derived from the Greek writers that the country was known by the name of Limurike, Tamilike or Tamil country.[2]

Relying mainly on literary evidence, Mr. Kanakasabha Pillay has attributed a Mongolian origin to the whole Dravidian race of Tamils, among whom he includes the Nayars, but anthropometric results point otherwise.[3]

As has been seen, many distinguished authorities are unanimously agreed that the Nayars belong to the Dravidian race with no doubt a considerable admixture of Aryan blood, but the date of their arrival in Malabar cannot be accurately determined.

It is assumed by some writers that the Aryans were conquerors who reduced *Asuras* (Dravidians) to slavery. Whatever might have been the fate of the aborigines, the *Asuras* were not subdued by the Aryans, and never became their serfs or dependants, but were converted gradually to Aryan usages by a regular fusion. Bishop Caldwell supports this view and says, that the subjugation of the Dravidians by the Aryans is

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[1] Races of Mankind, Vol. III, page 359.

[2] Malabar Law and Custom, Introduction, page 2.

[3] The Tamils, eighteen hundred years ago.

174 not borne out either by any Sanskrit authority or Dravidian traditions;[1] but certain legends refer to conflicts between them and the Hindu colonists of later times, and these are said to have been led by Parasurama, and the Nagas from Pätäla whom they found in possession of the country.[2] The latter were not forced to divide the spoil with the Kshatriyas or warriors who elsewhere counterbalanced the power of the Brahmans, and obliged them to keep up a continual struggle in which victory alternated with defeat. These internecine dissensions gave the indigenous element a chance to recover itself by degrees, and finally gave birth to a military aristocracy called the Nayars.[3]

The military character of the Nayars.

701 The Nayars of ancient times formed the chief militia in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore, and their valour and other fighting qualities evoked the admiration of foreigners, and inspired even the restless Portuguese poet Cameons, who described them in the following apt lines:—

> Poliar the labouring clans were named;
> By the proud Nayars the noble rank is claimed;
> The toils of culture and of art they scorn:
> The shining faulchion brandished in the right;
> Their left arm wields the target in the fight.

175
701 One of the earliest accounts of the Nayars is found in the writings of Duarte Barbosa, who described them as men of noble descent, who had to be armed as knights by the king or lord with whom they lived, and who could not call themselves Nayars until they had been so equipped as to bear arms. They were generally sent to school at the age of seven to learn all [868] manner of athletic feats and to enable them to use their [147] weapons.[4] Their sinews and joints were so stretched and anointed with the *oyle sesamus* by skillful fellows called "Panicars," who were captains in war, that they became very light and nimble; and could "wind and twine their bodies" as if they had no bones. They cast themselves backwards and forwards, high and low, to the astonishment of the beholders, and the delight in their weapon was so great that they

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[1] Grammar of the Dravidian Languages, Introduction, page 107.

[2] The Sun and the Serpent, page 107.

[3] Primitive Folk, page 107.

[4] A description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar by Duarte Barbosa, page 128—129.

persuaded themselves, that no nation could handle it with 175
such skill and dexterity.[1] Such trained young men became 701
the guards of some king or lord, and so faithful and obedient were they, that they had no hesitation to die for him when
required. They were the greatest and worst enemies of the 648
Portuguese, and did a great deal of mischief to them by sea. 175
Some of them had a naked rapier or cutlass in their right hand 411
and a great target in their left, made of light wood, some again [714]
were armed with bows and venomous arrows upon their shoulders; and while moving about, they made a great noise by knocking the hilt of the rapier against the target in order that they might be heard. Others carried long pikes, some pecus with the match readily lighted, and had the best locks that could be found in all Europe. They knew how to use them, and the Portuguese had no advantage over them. Wherever they went, they carried their arms both by day and night.[2]

"They went into battle almost naked, threw javelin with 175
equal address backward and forward, and drew the bow with 726
such skill that their second shaft often split the first. Their extraordinary agility made them the terror of every combat in forest or jungle. On the smallest provocation they prepared themselves for death, and having done so, one would hold his
ground against a hundred. Those attached to the person of [701]
the prince made it a point of honour not to survive him."[3]

Their military dress and mode of fighting.

"The military dress of the Nayar is a pair of short drawers 175
and his peculiar weapon is an instrument 411
with a thin but very broad blade hooked to-
wards the edge like a bill-hook or gardener's [714]
knife, and about the length of a Roman sword. The hooked instrument, the inseparable companion of the Nayar whenever he quits his dwelling on business, pleasure or for war, has no scabbard, and is usually grasped by the right hand as an ornamental appendage during the time of peace and used for destruction in war. When the Nayar employs his 'musquet' or his bow, the weapon already described is fixed in an instant by means of a catch in the waist belt, with the flat part of the blade diagonally across his back; and it can be

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[1] Johnstone in his relations of the most famous kingdom in the world, 1611.

[2] Voyages of Linschoten to the East Indies,

[3] Graul Reise nach Ost Indien,

175

411 disengaged as quickly whenever he drops his 'musquet'
in the wood or slings it across his shoulders for the purpose
of rushing to close encounter with this terrible instrument."[1]

704 Cavalry was unknown; there was only infantry. The sol-
714 diers wore a silk cloth wound round the head and carried
411 swords, shields, lances and bows. The king had an umbrella
[293] formed of the leaves of a tree and fixed on to the end of a cane,
[643] for protection from the sun. There was no standard. When
they were in battle, and one army was at a distance from the
726 other, two ranges of a cross-bow, the king would ask the Brah-
704 mans to go to the camp of the enemy and tell the knights to
let one hundred of his men fight with the same number on his
side, when both the parties would go to the central space to do
so. The fighting continued even for three days, when blows
were given on the head and at the legs. After the death of
some men on either side, the survivors were directed to return
to their camps. If any more fighting was desired, the same
[465] course was adopted. Sometimes the king rode on an elephant,
[701] and sometimes the Nayars carried him. The pay of a soldier
was four carlini a month, and in time of war half a ducat.

701 The Nayars whom the king received in his service were
643 never dismissed, however old they might be. They received
their pay and rations, and the king granted favours to whoso-
ever had served him well. If, however, they were left unpaid for
some years, some four or five hundred of the aggrieved would
rise up and go in a body to the palace, and send word to the
king that they would go away dismissed, because he did not
give them food. The king would then beg them to have patience,
pay them at once either the whole amount due to them or a
part of it with a promise to pay the balance at an early date.
The king generally satisfied them, considering it a disgrace
that they should go away to serve under another ruler. Even
[784] in times of war they were not at liberty to touch any peasant,
or eat and drink with him in his house without penal-
ty. The king was bound to support the mother and family
[752] of any soldier who died in war. He also treated, at his own
expense, any soldier who was wounded in battle.[2]

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[1] **Abbe Dubois People of India.**

[2] **A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar, page 130-131, Duarte Barbosa.**

Thus did the Nayars as a warlike race play a very 648
important part in the history of *Kerala* during the middle ages. 175
Their weapons and modes of fighting thereafter underwent 701
many changes under the influence of the Portuguese and the [177]
Dutch, who introduced western arms and tactics into the then
existing art of war, when also the Nayars proved equal to the
occasion. Labourdanais, who distinguished himself in the storming of the little town of Mahe, bore the brunt of many a
Nayar onslaught, and had therefore opportunities of forming a
just estimate of their work. Major Munro, who was instrumental in the storming of that little town in 1761, met the Nayar
troops in the field, and thus described their mode of fighting:
"One may as well look for the needle in a bottle of hay as any
of them in the day-time, they lurking behind the sand-banks
and bushes, except when we are marching towards the fort,
when they appear like bees out in the month of June besides
which they point their guns well and fire them also." Dr.
Buchanan, who under the orders of Lord Wellesley journeyed
through Mysore, Malabar and Canara, spoke of them in the
same strain. When Hyder Ali invaded Malabar, they committed terrible havoc on the Mysoreans. "The Nayars are
the military class of Malabar," writes Col. Wilkes, who was
struck with their pluck and agility. "They are perhaps not
exceeded by any nation on earth in their high spirit of independence, but like all persons stimulated by that spirit without the direction of discipline, their efforts are uncertain,
capricious and desultory." The last event in which they showed
their military valour was in the rebellion of the Pychee Raja of
Kurumbranad. With the fall of the Portuguese and the Dutch, 178
and the conquest and annexation of Malabar by the English East 181
India Company, the Nayars have almost lost their warlike [648]
characteristics, through successive generations of peace and
have now become attached to the land. Even writing in 1855,
Captain Drury contrasts the Nayar's effeminate disposition
with the martial valour of his forefathers. He does not bear
transplantation. He now prefers a quiet swing in the verandah
or a lounge under a tree, chewing betel. Unlike his ancestor,
he is becoming more and more domesticated. The Nayar 161
population has greatly increased and a large majority of them 164
are not very affluent; and among these physical deterioration
is noticeable.

361 The Nayars, like other Malayali Hindus, are not lovers
564 **Habitations.** of towns, but generally live in detached
houses, with large compounds and good
gardens. The strict customs of caste purity and impurity in
former times made them desert places where they were liable
to be polluted by the members of very low castes. They
generally select the site of a house either on the margin of
a fertile valley or ravine with bright green fields of rice in
351 front. The entrance to their compounds, which are often somewhat
raised off the ground by laterite or mud walls, is at some
little distance from the main house, and consists of a door in
the centre of a strong gate-way, which is the first that attracts
one's attention as the dwelling is approached. The gate is quaintly
constructed, and the surroundings are exceptionally neat and
[417] tidy. It is also essential that a stair or a ladder should lead
up to it from the bank of a green level paddy flat, reminding
one of the days when security of life and property
depended upon one's own ability to laugh a seige to scorn;
when a Nayar house was his castle, and when at the gate-way
were posted retainers to keep watch and ward against enemies.
[343] Seats for them to rest on, right and left, both outside and
inside, a solid quaintly carved door and lintel, a room above
approached by a ladder from inside, with windows, or openings
whence shots were discharged on lawless intruders, and finally
a thatched roof, complete the characterstics of a gate house.
Permission to build such a gate house was a rare privilege and
351 had to be obtained from the rulers, but with a change in the old
342 order of things, this restriction has, like many others of the kind,
[787] ceased to exist. The plan and other details of the structure of
a Nayar house are determined in strict conformity with the
principles of the ancient Hindu science of architecture based on
astrology.[1] A compound or garden is first selected and measured
out into a square plot and is then divided into four parts by
imaginary lines running lengthwise and breadthwise through
the centre or middle of it. Either the north-east or south-west
portion is chosen for the site of a house, the former being preferred
[764] to the latter. The south-east corner is generally set
apart as the family burial-ground. There are again special
spots selected for the well, tank, cow-shed, serpent grove and
the family deity. The selection of the site for the house is

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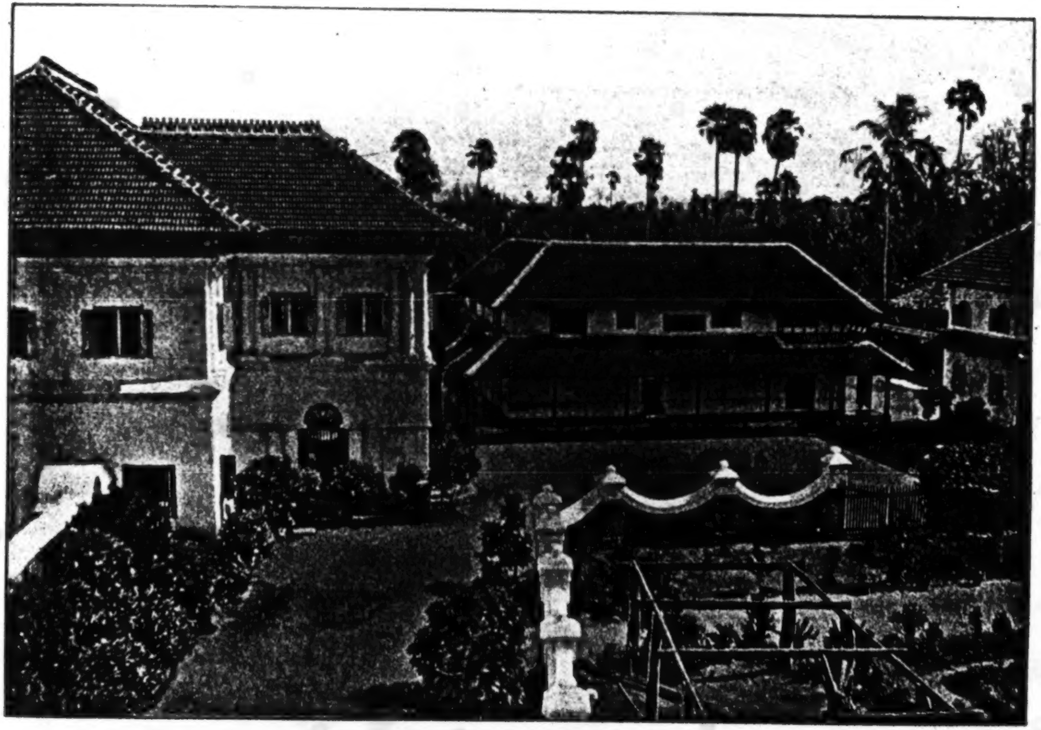
[1] Chandrika.

[facing p. 8]



A TYPICAL ARISTOCRATIC NAYAR HOUSE.

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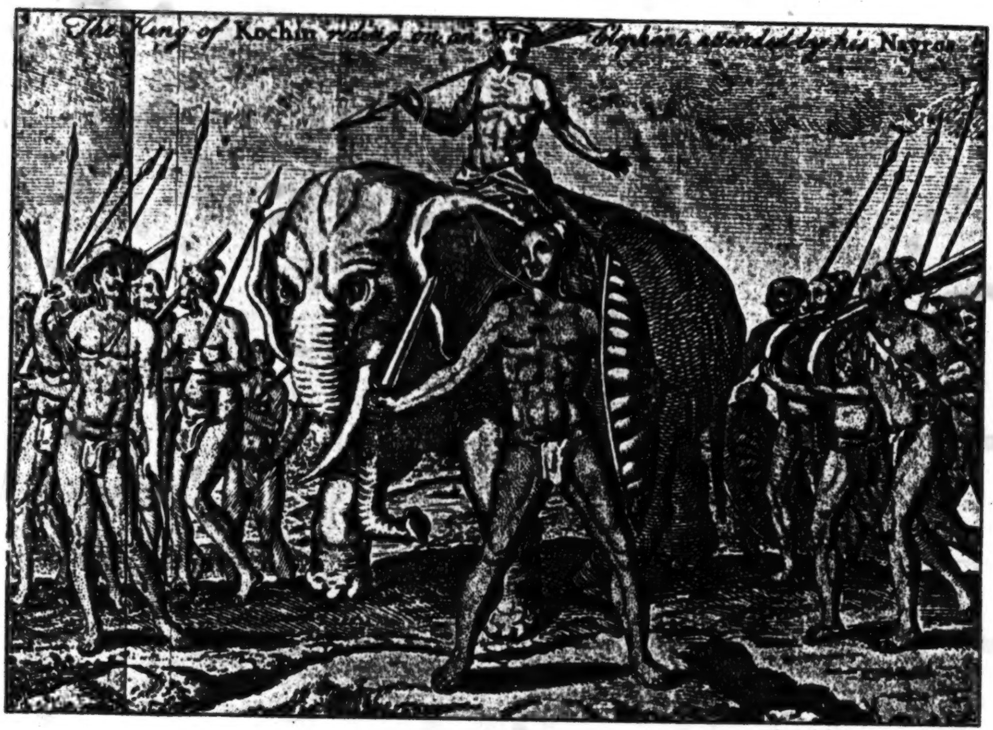
9:Iyer E-4,5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
A W11 Kerala A W11
Nayar

[facing p.5]


The King of Kochin riding on an Elephant attended by his Nayros

THE NAYAR WARRIORS OF ANCIENT TIMES

231
714
411
291
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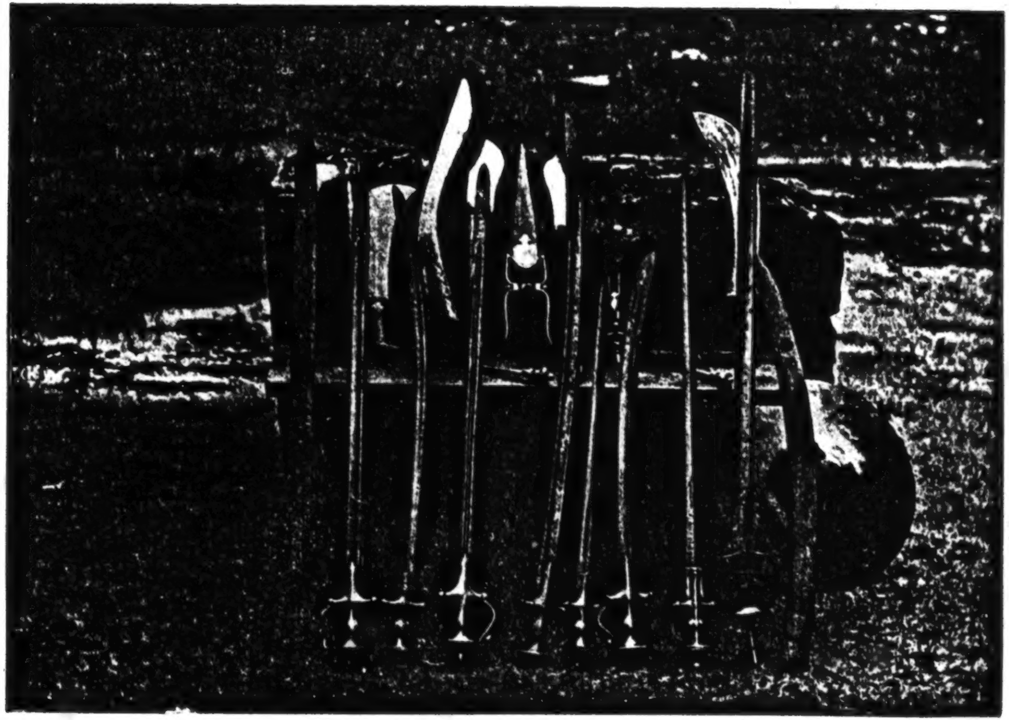
304

[Facing p.6]



THE WEAPONS OF THE OLD NAYAR WARRIORS.

partly guided by the influence of the monsoon. In regard to 342
the serpent grove or religious shrine, a square plot just in [357]
the middle of the south-west portion is considered the most [778]
auspicious. A typical Nayar house is quadrangular, with an
open space (*mittam*) in the centre; the western portion of it is [251]
the granary, while the rest of it is partitioned into rooms. The
northern portion comprises the store-room and the kitchen at
the western and the eastern extremities, with the dining room
in the middle, while the western and eastern portions are kept
as open halls for gatherings on important occasions. The [823]
house so constructed must face the rising sun—the east—and
yet rather inconsistently it is called the *patinjattupura* or the
western roof or building. The reason of this is that the *patinjattu* [574]
muri—the central chamber or the honoured guest chamber [769]
in the house, sanctuary of the ancestors of its occupants—must
be so placed as to admit of entrance through its doorway
the sun's earliest rays. Behind one or more of the rooms above
mentioned is a *chaippu* forming a kind of enclosed verandah
room. Another type most commonly met with consists of a
portico serving as a reception-hall, the other portions of the
building corresponding in details, more or less, with the quadrangular
edifice just described. The rigid adherence to the 342
science of architecture is confined not only to the Nayars and 787
other high caste-men, but also to the generality of the Native
Christians and Mahomedans who, before construction, always
consult some expert in the choice of a proper site and the
formation of a ground plan of the house. Misfortunes or even
calamities are often attributed to the violation of these principles,
and very often a newly built house is either altered to
remedy the defects or even pulled down. There are again
houses, where the two types are combined. The huts of the 342
poor classes consist generally of one or two small, dark and [735]
ill-ventilated rooms with a kitchen at one end, and a verandah
either in front or on all sides of the main building.
With the increase of population, and with the demand for [178]
more houses, the old notions and *sastraic* injunctions are being
overlooked as a matter of necessity, and the old fashioned [532]
houses are displaced by those erected on sound sanitary
principles. The wood-work of the buildings is solid and
substantial, and is in some cases beautifully carved. The walls [177]
are generally of laterite, brick or mud, and roofs which till

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342 recently were thatched are now being tiled with tiles of
European pattern manufactured either locally or in Mangalore.
342 In these days of comparative peace and security of life and
178 property from marauders and free-booters, the necessity for
massive structures has ceased to exist, and, coupled with this,
the improved notions of architecture, derived from an easy
intercourse with more civilised centres, the rapid progress of
education, and with it a better knowledge of, and regard for,
sanitation and hygiene, have wrought remarkable changes in
the construction of buildings, so that a better class of houses,
well built, airy, and commodious, is displacing the old ones
with their small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms.

351 As part of the surroundings of the dwellings in the same
[343] compound, there are frequently seen a cattle shed, an excavated
tank for bathing purposes, often full of fish and water lilies, a
[312] well so arranged as to admit of water being drawn directly from
[515] it to the kitchen, an out-house *(matam)* for the Brahman
[574] travellers or visitors, and, lastly, a small edifice for the family
deity. The gardens surrounding the houses are adorned with
[343] mango and jack trees, immense bananas, groves of cocoanut
[245] and areca palms and various kinds of flowers. Thus, in most
places, their houses, which are occupied by fine types of
humanity, (well made men and shapely women), are situated
beneath the grateful shade of magnificent avenues of trees.

356 Four hundred years ago, a Portuguese traveller, writing
[175] on the subject, remarks* upon the Nayar houses as being scrupulously clean and neat. Without any exaggeration it may
be said that they are proverbially so, and the women are either
naturally endowed with a taste, or are trained from early child-
352 hood, to keep the houses and everything therein neat and clean.
[556] Those of the richer and middle classes are in these days fur-
[177] nished with articles of European manufacture, and all their
domestic utensils, for daily use, are made either of bell-metal,
copper or brass, all well cleaned and washed early every morning.

415 The furniture of the poorer classes is very simple; a metal
352 pot with a spout, a few metal plates and saucers, a few metal
412 pans of different sizes, a spitoon of brass, a few mats, a knife,
184 a cot or two, a betel box, and a few wooden bins for grains, are
nearly all the requirements of a household in this respect.

342 The house itself is called by several names according to
564 the occupant's caste, that of an ordinary Nayar being a *veedu*

or *bhavanam*, while the man in authority dwells in an *idam*, 342
and the Raja in a *kovilakam* or *kottaram*. A separate name 564
for each *tarawad* or family is peculiar to this coast.

There are some superstitious beliefs entertained by the Na- 342
yars as well as other high caste-men, in the selection of the site 351
for a house and compound, the quality of the soil, the site of the 823
tank, well, cow-shed, and the edifice for the family deity; and [564]
as an account of these will be of some ethnographic interest, it is given below:—

The best site should abound with milky trees full of fruits and flowers; its boundary should be of a quadrangular form, level and smooth with a sloping declivity towards the east, producing a hard sound with a stream running from left to right, of an agreeable odour, fertile, and of an uniform colour, containing a great quantity of soil, producing water when dug to the height of a man's arm raised above his head, and situated in a region of moderate temperature. The ground possessed of qualities directly opposite to those mentioned above is the worst, and that which has a mixed nature is of the middling quality.[1]

The site to be avoided is described in a special manner as follows:—That which has the form of a circle, or a semicircle, or containing three, five or six angles, or resembling a trident or shaped like the back of a fish, the back of an elephant, or a turtle, or the face of a cow, etc., situated opposite to any of the intermediate quarters abounding with human skulls, stones or worms, ant-hills, bones, slimy earth, decayed wood, coals, dilapidated wells, subterraneous pits, fragments of tiles, limestones, ashes, husks of corns and exposed to the wafted effluvia of curds, oil, honey, dead bodies, and fishes; such a spot should be avoided on every account.

In regard to colour and taste, ground with smell like that [822]
of ghee and with sweet taste is good for Brahmans; that with [827]
the colour and smell of blood and with an astringent taste, for Kshatriyas; that with yellow colour, smell of boiled rice and bitter taste, for Vaisyas; and that with dark colour, smell of toddy and taste of cow-dung, for Sudras.

There is also a test for the selection of a site by lighting [372]
a lamp in a hole. A hole measuring one cubit in depth,

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[1] Ramraz's essay on the architecture of the Hindus, London, pp. 15-29.

342 351 823 372 [524] having been well plastered with mud, a saucer of unbaked earth filled with ghee and four lighted wicks is placed therein, for testing the quality of the soil. If the wicks burn brightly in all four directions, the ground is fit for all the castes including Brahmans and other caste-men. If the wicks do not burn, it will not suit any of the four castes.

342 804 777 822 Auspicious times for the construction of houses.

If the house is constructed by a person in the month of Medam (April-May) he gets disease: in Edavam (May-June) he gets money and jewel: in Mithunam (June-July) there will be death: in Ashad or Karkadakam (July-August) he gets servants and jewels, but no beasts; in Chingam (August-September) friendship; in Kanni (September-October) loss of friends; in Thulam (October-November) death of his wife; in Vrischigam (November-December) money and crops; in Dhanu (December-January) he will become a devotee; in Makaram (January-February) there will be fear from enemies and thieves, but the builder will know of profits from many directions: in Kumbham (February-March), danger of fires; in Meenam (March-April) gold and sons.

The following asterisms are auspicious for commencing a building:—Aswini, Rohini, Mulam, the three Uttaras, Mrigasirsha, Swathi, Hasta, Anuradha. All days of the week, except Sunday and Tuesday, are auspicious. A house should be commenced at auspicious moments known as *muhurtas*: Sveda, Mitra, Mahendra, Gandharva, Rohini and also Raja Sävitra. The erection of the pillars should be performed at auspicious *lagnas*, moments when the sun and the moon are favourable; other moments should be avoided.

342 777 821 Inauspicious times.

Building operations should not be commenced in the rainy season nor at the end of the third part of the dark fortnight, and in the first and second part of the bright fortnight. Of the phases of the moon, the fourth, ninth, and fourteenth should be avoided. Tuesday is also to be omitted; for working on that day brings injury or bad luck. Days marked with dangers natural or any other, arising out of the earth, sky, or heavenly bodies and other calamities, such as the death of a friend, and those made ominous by the influence of some planets are considered inauspicious. A well informed person should do his work when the moon and the stars are favourable.

342 777 778 823 The construction of a house on the left or back of a Vishnu temple, on the right of a Siva or Durga temple, or by the right side of a Sastha temple, will cause calamities to the occupants; but that on the opposite side will bring prosperity.

Houses should not be constructed near temples, paddy flats, hermitages, the sea, hills, or cow-shed; if constructed near temples, they should be lower in height than the religious edifices.

342 823 Houses, constructed on a dry-land (*paramba*) with an elevation to the north-west, will last for eighteen years; and if on an elevation towards the east, south and south-east, a hundred years; if, however, they are built on a ground with an elevation to the north-east, they will last for a thousand, if to the west, twelve years, and to the north, eight years. Houses built on grounds sloping to the north with *athi* (Ficus racemosa) near them, those sloping to the east with *arayal* (Ficus religiosa) growing thereon, those with an inclination to the west, with Perál (Ficus Indica) growing thereon, and grounds with *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) are fit for the occupation of the members of the four castes.

824 342 351 823 The following trees, namely, *elanni* (Mimusops Elangi) or *perál* (Ficus Indica) growing on the eastern side of a house, *athi* (Ficus racemosa) or *puli* (Tamarindus Indica) on the southern side, *arayal* (Ficus religiosa), *pala* (Echites scholaris) or milk plant on the west, *nága* tree (Trichosanthes anguina) and *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) on the north, will bring prosperity to the occupants. Jack and mango trees cocoanut and areca palms may grow on all sides of a house. *Arayál* (Ficus religiosa) growing on the eastern side of a house will cause it to take fire, while *perál* on the western side will give cause for fear from enemies. *Athi* on the northern side of the house will bring on abdominal complaints to the occupants. *Aráyal* growing near a house must be cut off, unless the distance between the house and the tree be twice the height of the latter. [343] A cow-shed may be erected either to the east or the west of the main building; and a similar one to the south of it for bullocks and buffaloes. There are certain ceremonies performed both at the commencement of construction and at its various stages, as well as before the occupation of a house, a detailed description of which will be found in the account of the Brahmans.[1]

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[1] Chandrika.

Internal structure of the caste.

564 463 182 174 Caste assigns to each individual his profession or calling; and when once the system is handed down from father to son, and from generation to generation, it is found impossible for any person or his descendants to change for any other the condition of life which the law assigns to him. The most far-sighted and prudent men in ancient times probably found such an institution to be the only means for maintaining a system of civilisation amongst a people endowed with the peculiar characteristics of the Hindus.

The important principle which guided all ancient legislators was, that no man in the commonwealth should be left without work. At the same time, they knew that the people were indolent by nature. They were further aware of the fact that, unless every individual was duly provided with some work, for which he might be best fited, the social fabric must necessarily fall to pieces. The law-givers therefore established durable and inviolable rules for the different castes constituting [626] the Hindu race, the violation of which brings divine displeasure, and meets with severe punishment both in this world [688] and in the world to come.

It is some such guiding principle that is involved in the 564 division of the Nayars into various sub-castes. In Kerala the 74 Brahmans seem to have been instrumental in the formation of castes to some extent; for, it is found that some castes have to do services in temples to Brahmans. Distinct professional [463] groups in the tribal organisations may have existed there before the advent of these people, who probably found it easy to make a ready adjustment of the social groups, and thought it advisable to assign to them well defined occupations. Therefore, the original institution of the caste system does not merit any serious condemnation.

Some are of opinion that it is not quite correct to say that the Nayars are a caste, and that it would be better to call them a tribe, as Bhattacharya has done in his 'Castes and Sects'. I am however inclined to think that the name is not [114] quite appropriate, and that they do form a caste of people, known as Malayali Sudras.

564 In regard to subdivisions, there is no uniformity. So numerous and varied are they in Cochin, Malabar, and Travancore, that titles of distinction that have been conferred upon

certain families from time to time are being looked upon as subcastes. *Játinirnayam*, a Malayalam work of some authority, which gives an account of Malayali castes, limits the number of subdivisions to eighteen, fourteen of which belong to the high caste Sudras, the remaining four being of low caste Sudras. In the last Census Report of the Cochin State, the same number is kept up with slight modifications, to which I am not inclined to agree. It is not possible at this stage to state the exact number of subdivisions, and the following are those that have come under my personal investigation in the State:— 564 [114]

1. *Kiriyattil Nayars.*—They form the highest of all the Nayar subdivisions in the Cochin State as well as south Malabar. The word *kiriyattil* or *kiriyam* is said to be derived from the Sanskrit, *graham*, which means a house. The derivation is doubtful. The members of this subdivision are believed to have been the descendants of the early Brahmans in their union with the Deva, Gandharva and Rakshasa women brought into Kerala by Parasurama, and their duty has been primarily to serve them. The members of the aristocratic class, who still bear the titles of Panikkar, Kurup, Kaimal, Kartha, Menon, and Menokki belong to this class; in this class are included the old *náduvázhis*, and *desavázhis*—rulers of *náds* and *desams*—the military leaders, Pattola Menons and other *sthánis* or titled persons. Being superior to the members of other subdivisions, the *Kiriyattil* Nayars can cook for all others. The Nayars of this class are, according to current tradition, connected with the sixty-four families of Vellalas, whom Dr. Oppert has tried to identify with the Pallavas.

2. *Illattu Nayars.*—They are known in Cochin and South Malabar also as Sudra Nayars. They are par excellence the attendants and retainers of the Nambuthiris. In many parts of the State and in Malabar, they have, by close contact with the Nambuthiris, fashioned many of their personal habits after the truly Brahmanical style, and are, on that account, classed among the high class Nayars. Very seldom does a Nambuthiri woman go outside without being accompanied by a maid-servant or *dasi* belonging to this class, and every woman of this class is her constant attendant and is indispensable for her various ceremonies. They are, I understand, found very largely in Travancore also, where they form [357]

564 the highest class. There are many who profess to belong to certain Nambuthiri *illams*, such as the Azhavancheri and other *illams*. They are obliged to be strict vegetarians owing to their service in the Nambuthiri families.

3. *Swarupattil Nayars.*—The members of this class render services to the Kshatriyas. There are, it is said, three [357] minor subdivisions, namely, *Pindiyánmar*, *Patindluvíttukar* and *Chitayans*. The members of the first class serve as menials in the houses of Kshatriyas; those of the second have to supply them with everything necessary for the performance of all kinds of ceremonies; and those of the third serve them during pollution. They appear to correspond to the Chàrnavar and Sudras. Swarupattil Nayars or Swarupakkár (from *swarupam*, princely house) are so called because of their service in princely houses or Kshatriya families. They are next in rank to *Illakkars*.

[167] 4. *Agattu and Purattu Charna Nayars.*—The Chàrna Nayars or Chàrnavar who are mostly immigrants from Malabar include the two subdivisions, Agattu Chárnavar and Purattu Chárnavar, "inside and outside retainers," respectively. There are two explanations of the terms. According to one, the Purattu Chárnavar are the armed retainers of the various chieftains, while the Agattu Chárnavar are the personal and domestic servants. According to the other explanation, the distinction refers to their position at *yágams* (sacrifices) at which it is said that various duties inside the *yágasala* or sacrificial pandal are to be performed by the Agattu Chárna Nayars, while the Purattu Chárna Nayars remain on guard outside. In point of social precedence, the Purattu Chárnavar are ranked superior to the Agattu Chárnavar, probably because the latter do not belong to any of the fighting clans. A woman of [582] the former may mate with a man of the latter, but not *vice* [264] *versa*. Only the men of the two subdivisions may eat together, but the women may mate with men of their own clan or of any other or with a Nambuthiri. The men of this class form *sambandhams* in South Malabar with the Kiriyattil women. The caste-men affix the title of Nayar after their names. There are many of this class found in the State.

[451] 5. *Menókki and Pattóla Menon.*—Men of these castes serve as accountants in temples and in aristocratic families,

The above two subdivisions are mere titles and the members 564 belonging to them are not numerous in the State.

6. *Márár.*—The members of this subdivision act as [534] drummers and musicians in temples and also render important services to Brahmans and Kshatriyas in their ceremonies.

7. *Pádamangalam Nayars.*—The members of this clan [788] are engaged in escorting processions in temples. Some also act as sweepers in them. There are not, I am informed, very many in the State belonging to this subdivision.

8. *Pallichán Nayars.*—These are palanquin-bearers of the Brahmans and Kshatriyas.

9. *Vattekád Nayars.*—They are the pressers of oil for use in temples. It has been remarked by some that the Vattékád Nayars are not always admitted to be true Nayars and that in some places they are called Vániyans (oil mongers.) The subdivision is endogamous. There are two minor subdivisions, the members of which neither interdine nor intermarry.

10. *Chempukotti Nayars.*—These are the workers in 564 copper for temples and Brahman houses. The following tradi- 326 tion regarding them is interesting :—

"Chempukottis or Chempóttis (copper tappers) are copper-workers whose traditional business is the roofing of the *srikóvil* or inner shrine of the temple with that metal. They are said to have originally formed part of the *Kammálan* or artisan community. When the great temple of Taliparamba [778] was completed, it was purified on a scale of unprecedented grandeur, no less than thousand Brahmans being employed. What was their dismay when the ceremony was well forward, to see a Chempukotti coming from the *srikóvil*, where he had been putting the finishing touches to the roof! This appeared to involve a re-commencement of the whole tedious and costly ritual; and the Brahmans gave vent to their feelings of despair, when a vision from Heaven re-assured them. And thereafter Chempótties have been raised in the social scale, and are not regarded as a polluting caste." [1]

11. *Otattu Nayars.*—They are the tile and thatch ma- 564 kers for temples and Brahman houses.

12. *Edachéri Nayars.*—They are the makers and sellers of dairy produce.

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[1] **Malabar District Gazetteer, page 120.**

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564 13. *Anduran Nayars.*—These Nayars are the manufacturers of earthenware for use in temples.

14. *Attikurusi Nayars.*—They are the priests who officiate at funeral ceremonies for all sub-castes above them.

In respect of the fourteen subdivisions of the high caste *Sudrás*, it must be said that the non-military classes, namely, the Otattu Nayars, Chempukotti, Anduran, Pallichán and [264] [582] Vattékád Nayars, have to be treated as an intermediate class of *Sudrás*, because there is neither interdining nor intermarriage between the members of these subdivisions and those treated as high caste *Sudrás*; but they are classed among the high caste *Sudrás* on account of their services in temples, which give them the privilege to enter them and bathe in public tanks.

Under the head of low caste Sudrás are included four sub-castes, namely Tharakans, Velakkathalavans, Veluthédans, and Cháliyans, who pollute other Nayars by touch, and who are on that account called low caste Sudrás. Pollution by touch appears to be the basis for the above classification, and on this principle, the three castes except the Tharakans are treated as low caste *Sudras*; for, their touch pollutes all castes above them. The Tharakans had been a trading class, but they have now taken to other professions. They are a Tamil class and are the least Malayáli to be brought on a level with the high caste Sudrás, though in their customs they are almost like the latter. A similar process of assimilation has been and is still going on among some of the Tamil castes of the Chittur Taluk as well as elsewhere, by which the members of such castes are developing themselves into Nayars.

553 554 Titles. The Nayars affix to their names one of the following titles, the origin and significance of which are given below:—

1. *Kartha.*—The word means a 'doer', and appears to have been used as a title by some of the old Madura kings. The rulers of Cochin are said to have confirmed this title on some influential Nayar families, and made them petty chieftains subject to their paramountcy. All the Karthás belong to the *Illam* division of the Nayar caste. Among the old families in the Cochin State still possessing this title are Chéránellur [551] Kartha near Ernakulam, Kódasséri Kartha near Chálakudi, and Kuzhupilli Kartha.

2. *Kaimal* (from *kai*, hand, meaning power).—The Kaimals were, according to tradition, the fighting masters of Cochin and Malabar. At one time, they were in charge of the royal treasury, which by respected custom could not be visited by the Rajas themselves, except in the presence of the Kaimals. "Neither could they", says Barbosa, "take anything out of it without a great necessity, and by the council of this person and certain others." They were also the chieftains or rulers of certain localities, owing a kind of allegiance to the ruler of the State. Many of the Kaimal families are still in existence, such as the Koratti Kaimal, Cherukayil Kaimal and others. 533 554 [244]

3. *Kurup*.—This is also a title attached to the names of many Nayar families and is also assumed by other castes. Some of them were military instructors (Kalari Kurups) in the old royal families of Cochin and in North Malabar.[1]

4. *Panikkar*.—The word comes from *pani*, meaning work. The Panikkars originally kept *kalaries* (fencing or gymnastic schools with a sort of private chapel attached to it) in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore. They are spoken of by the Portuguese writers as the strength of the country. They are no longer in charge of *kalaris* but are now engaged in other occupations. Some are experts in sword play. [874]

5. *Nayar*.—The Pathináyirathil (10,000) and Muppathináyirathil (30,000) Nayars who constitute the forty thousand belonged to the Kiriyam and Chárna castes. The title was generally conferred in Malabar by kings or feudal chiefs, but in the State it was mostly assumed by the Sudrás who had not received other titles.

6. *Menon*.—The word is a contraction of *mél*, above, and *avan*, he, and means a superior person. The title was given to many Nayar families or individuals by the rulers of Cochin. As soon as a person received this title, he was presented with an *óla* (palmyra leaf) and an iron style for writing thereon. This is symbolical of the profession of an accountant. Even now, in Cochin and British Malabar, each *amsom* or revenue village has a writer or an accountant who is called a Ménón. The title of *Menókki* means one who looks over or superintends, and is found only in British [451]

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[1] Ethnographic appendices, page 131.

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554 Malabar, where it is a creation of the Zamorin.

7. *Asán.*—The word means a teacher. He is also a head-man (*Karayinmél Asán*), who has certain social functions in connection with the marriage and other ceremonies.

8. *Achan.*—The word means father. It is the title of the Palghat Rajas, the ministers of the Calicut and Cochin Rajas (Mángát Achan and Páliyat Achan), and also of several other old Nayar chiefs.

9. *Manndtiyar.*—This is the title of certain aristocratic families in the Chittur Taluk near Palghat. The word is derived from *man*, earth, and *nétiyavar*, earners.

Marriage prohibitions.

564 Among the high caste Sudras marriage is hypergamous,
582 while the low caste Sudras are endogamous.
833 This is the general rule, though exceptions
783 may sometimes be found. A Nayar is allowed to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than himself, but his womenkind are prohibited from exercising the same liberty. This is called the *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam*. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulomam* from *Anu* with *lómam* *rómam* the hair, going with the hair or grain. So *Prathilómam* means going against the hair or grain. According to this usage, a Nayar woman, consorting with a man of the higher caste, follows the hair, purifies the blood, raises the progeny in social estimation. By cohabitation with a man of lower subdivision, clan or caste, she is guilty of *Prathilómam*; and if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole family being boycotted.[1]

564 The rule of *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam* is everywhere
582 observed with great strictness. In many cases, Nambuthiris,
783 Embráns, Póttis and Tamil Brahmans, Kshatriyas and

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[1] Alliances between the people of North Malabar and South Malabar seem to be extremely rare. It is partly because of the principle of Prathilomam and perhaps partly that the Nayar women cannot cross the Korapuzha which marks the boundary between the two. Nor can the women of the extreme north of North Malabar cross the river between it and South Canara. The reason is said to be that the Kolatheri Raja so commanded owing to the fear that was entertained about their being captured and taken as wives by the Arabs. Similarly, till about fifty years ago the Nayar women from North Travancore and Cochin were prohibited from going beyond Quilon southward. These customs are being overlooked by the educated members of the community and it may almost be said that the custom has begun to die out.

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Further, in the extreme south of South Malabar a high caste bride mates with a low caste bridegroom on the Prathilomam already explained. The husband cannot touch her without pollution, when she is engaged in taking meals. In the case of Nambuthiris, the same custom is in force and they cannot be seen, while engaged in religious ceremonies or taking meals. With the spread of education, official status, wealth, power, and influence, many of these time-honoured customs are fast disappearing.

Ambalavásis form alliances with Nayar women, but the 564
latter and their children cannot touch their husbands and 582
fathers without polluting them. The children of this union 783
belong to the mother's family. In the clan system, descent was at first reckoned in the female line; consequently, uterine ties alone constituted kinship. The father was not regarded as related even to his children, and not considered as a member of the family. In this system all the children bear the clan name, and the clan name becomes the test of blood relationship. But the moment the descent is recognised through the male, the clan system breaks down. Among the Nayars the kinship is still reckoned through the female line.

Marriage is endogamous among the low caste Sudrás. 564
The following restrictions are however in force among all classes 582
of Sudrás. There cannot be intermarriages between the descendants of any female ancestor. It is strictly prohibited even [614]
in the case of two persons belonging to the same *tarawid* or family whose relationship cannot be traced to its origin, but is only traditional. A man cannot marry the sister of his deceased wife. The custom is more changing. A man cannot marry from the family of his deceased wife, but is now limited to the *thávashi* to which his wife belonged. Even this is now being overlooked.

[P. 72]

CHAPTER II.

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THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

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A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

582 According to Nayar ideas the most desirable bride for a young man is the daughter of his maternal uncle.

588 585 Marriage customs. There are two forms of marriage in vogue among the Nayars, namely, the *Thálikettu kalyánam* (*táli* tying ceremony), and the *Sambandham* (the customary nuptial union of man and woman), the first of which is performed for every girl before puberty, and the second, the real adult marriage, is celebrated after she comes of age. The *táli* tying for every girl is compulsory before she arrives at maturity,[1] and the omission or neglect of it [68] will place her and her family under a ban; for, it is considered a religious impurity for a girl to attain puberty before the [782] performance of this ceremony. There is however a tendency for these restrictions to be overlooked now-a-days.

588 In every *taravád* or family, the ceremony is performed once in ten or twelve years, and all the girls down to the baby in the cradle, who have not already undergone this ceremony, are married in this fashion for the sake of economy. When, in a family, the *táli* tying ceremony has to be performed for a girl or a number of girls, the *káranavan* or senior member thereof, at a meeting of the friends and relatives of [787] the family, sends for the local astrologer, who after examining the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls determines the auspicious hour for it as well as for certain subsidiary rites

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[784] [1] As a rule, the tali tying ceremony is performed before the girl attains puberty, but sometimes it is performed afterwards. In the latter case, the girl is prohibited from entering temples during the period intervening between the attainment of puberty and the tali tying ceremony.

which precede or follow it. [1] Information is then given to the 588
relatives, and friends of the family regarding the performance [203]
of the ceremony on a certain date, when invitations are
sent around to those that should attend the wedding. The
ceremony then opens with a fixing of the post [2] for the erection
of a pandal, which is tastefully decorated and in which the
ceremony is performed. The male members of the village are [574]
invited and treated to a feast followed by the distribution of [431]
betel leaf, arecanuts and tobacco for chewing. [3] In the Cochin
State, every time the ceremony is performed in a privileged [556]
family, or in one wishing to obtain privileges, a member thereof
visits His Highness the Raja with presents (*thirumulkāzhcha*), [643]
and requests his permission for the celebration. Similar [431]
presents are also made to the Nambuthiri *jenmies* by their
tenants and others attached to the *illams*. It is interesting [424]
to note that certain privileges, such as sitting on grass mats, [643]
having a procession with an elephant, beating of drums, firing
of pop-guns, worshipping of the Sun on a platform especially
constructed, have often to be obtained from the ruler of the
State. [4] Then follows the *Ashtamangalyam Vekkal* (procession
to the marriage pandal to place the eight auspicious
things, namely rice, paddy, tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an
arrow, a looking glass, a well washed cloth, lighted fire, and a
small wooden box called cheppu) which is a formal beginning
of the ceremony, or if necessary, earlier still, and for which
a *Brāhmani* is invited. On the night previous to the cere- [533]
mony, the girl neatly dressed and adorned in her best
is taken by her caste-women to a reserved spot in the
house (*Patinnāttu Iruttal*, seating on the western side),
where some ceremonies are gone through, and the *Brāhmani*
or *Pushpini* entertains the party with her songs,
chiefly *Purānic*. Soon after, the girl and the female members
of the family, dressed in gay attire and decked with costly
ornaments, come out in procession to the pandal where the

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[1] The village astrologer is entitled to be formally invited. He makes certain predictions at the sight of the messenger about the results of the marriage. When he arrives at the gate of the house, he is formally received, and he makes certain other predictions from the movement of the flame of a lamp as to the result, happy or otherwise, of the marriage. In the latter case, he suggests some remedies. [787]

[2] For this also an auspicious hour is fixed by the astrologer.

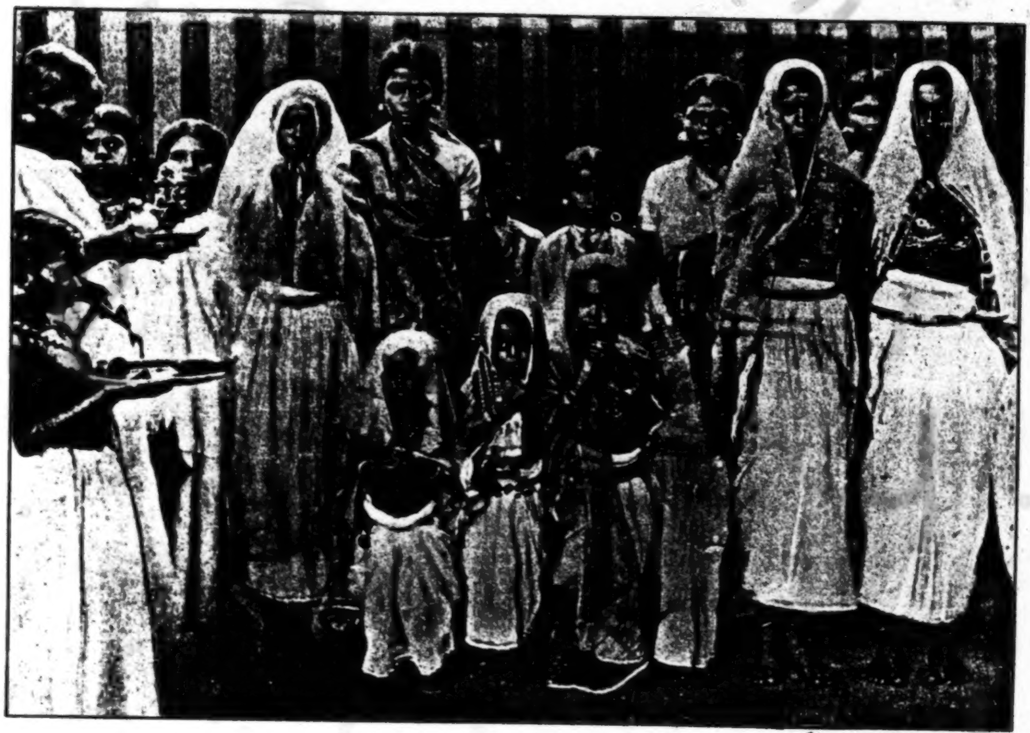
[3] A few important members sit together and prepare a kind of list for the purchase of provisions for the feast and other expenses. [556]

[4] Such privileges are permanently enjoyed by certain aristocratic families. Some obtain them on marriage occasions.

588 same formality is again gone through. The girl has to sit [778] with her face veiled. After going round the pandal, three, five or seven times, a cutting of the jasmine placed in a brass vessel is carried by the Elayad or family priest, who, mounted on an elephant with it, and accompanied by a grand procession with the beating of drums, a display of fire-works, and the joyous shouts of men and women, goes to the nearest Bhagavathi or other temple, where the plant and the *tāli* (marriage badge) placed in a vessel are consecrated by the performance of a *puja* by the temple priest. The party then return home with it. The night previous to the ceremony is [574] marked by a feast called *Athāzham*. Next day, the girl who is again properly dressed and well adorned, is led to the reserved spot or the central chamber in which are placed a lighted brass lamp and a vessel full of rice. A short time before the auspicious hour, she goes round the pandal or shed three times, and is led on by the *Brāhmani* to the worship of the Sun (*Adithyane Thozheekal*). In some cases this is done on the bare ground, and in others in a shed provided with a ceiling of plank previously erected for the occasion. After this the girl is seated in front of the shed and somewhat on its western side. The bridegroom or the *tāli* tier, who may be a Thirumulpād in the case of several girls, is invited and lodged in a house near the bride's family, where he and his friends are treated to a feast called *Ayal* or *Ayini Oonu*. A short time before the auspicious hour, the bridegroom, armed with a sword and neatly dressed, starts in procession with his party to the bride's house, where, at the gate, he is received by a few male members with *ashtamangalyam* in their hands and seated conspicuously in the pandal. In some cases, there is a grand procession from the bride's house to meet the bridegroom's party. A male member of the family, either the maternal uncle or the brother of the bride, washes his feet, and brings the girl, who is already gaily dressed and bedecked with ornaments, [431] into the pandal, round which she goes three times. She is then [326] seated on his left side, and the girl's father makes presents of [787] cloths (*manthrakodi*) in which bride and bridegroom dress themselves, and after the usual distribution of gifts to Brahmans and the Elayad, the latter hands over the *tāli* made by the village goldsmith, at the lucky moment mentioned

9:Iyer E-4,5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

[Facing p. 24]



A TALI-TYING GROUP OF NAIR GIRLS.

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by the Kaniyán or local astrologer, to the bridegroom who [431]
with the sword on his lap ties it round the neck of the girl. [787]
She is then required to hold an arrow and a looking glass. [326]
When several girls have to undergo the ceremony, a single Thirumulpád performs it or as many Thirumulpads as there
are girls. The Thirumulpad gets one to eight rupees for [465]
each girl. As soon as the *táli* tying is over, certain formalities indicative of the wife's duties (giving the bridegroom betel to chew, giving him a vessel of water to wash his feet and some fruits to eat, etc.), are gone through, and after this, the *táli* tier is allowed to depart receiving his
fee for the service rendered by him. The account given 184
above is that of the ceremony performed in the aristocra- 588
tic families of the State. Among the Nayars in the northern
parts of the State as well as in other places, the Kaniyan or the [787]
village astrologer examines the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls and those of the boys of the families of their *enangans*, selects the boy or boys fit to tie the *táli* and determines the auspicious hour, when information is also given to the *káranavan* of the boy's families regarding the proposal and a formal request to them to allow the boys to serve as bridegrooms. In the event of their willingness, preparation for the ceremony begins at once. The rites and the order in which they are performed differ in different places, and in different subdivisions of the same caste, but the general characteristics are
the same throughout. In well-to-do families there is a *táli* [556]
tier for each girl, while in others, a young man is invited to tie the conjugal collar for one girl, and for others, the mother does it. The beating of drums, firing of pop-guns, the procession with elephant, and the worship of the Sun by the girl on a raised platform are all dispensed with. The other formalities except the *Bráhmani's* song in some places are the same as those described above. Added to the jollity of the occasion are the vociferous and joyous shouting of the parties of men arranged for the purpose, as also a peculiar sound produced by the women assembled there.

The married couple are taken inside the house, and the 588
ceremony is practically over. The *Karayinmél Asán*, the head- 622
man of the village, plays an important part in the ceremony. In a conspicuous part of the pandal he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which are spread, a grass mat, a black blanket and

588 a white cloth, one over the other. His permission is solicited
622 for the performance of the ceremony, and, with his consent,
[465] the *táli* is tied. He is paid four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two or
sixty-four *puthans* (one *puthan* is equal to ten pies), according to
the means of the family. He also gets some curry stuffs, betel
588 leaves, arecanuts and tobacco. There is also at the time a
574 grand distribution of *pán supári*, scented sandal paste, jasmine
[431] flowers to the women of the village and to the wives of the
relatives assembled there. Then follows the feast to the
guests assembled there, for which certain formalities are observed,
with regard to the seats arranged for them; any violation
of the social etiquette will result in the guests abruptly leaving
the dining hall without partaking of any food. The women of
the family and their relatives are first served. The women of
the sub-caste as well as those of the village return home after
chewing betel. The men of the same sub-castes and others are
[564] next served, then others lower in status to them, and lastly
come in for their share the village barber and washerman.
Provision is sometimes made to feed the members of the
very low castes. In the meanwhile, what is known as *Pakarcha*
(cooked rice, curries, sweets, etc., for the feasts) is sent to the
families of relations. It must be said that the various
[262] preparations of the feast are boiled rice, vegetable curries,
páyasam (rice boiled in milk) and butter milk, and the
grandness of the feast is judged by the quantity of rice
prepared for consumption, and other preparations are in proportion
to it. The first day's ceremony and the feast thus come
to an end. The ceremony however lasts for the next three
days, but there is nothing of importance on the second and the
third days, except some dancing and music by maidens inside
the *pandal*. In some places, on the third day, the caste-men of
the village are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding
and to varieties of amusements, such as the *Kathakali* and
other performances.

588 On the fourth day, the caste-men are again invited. The
[564] married couple bathe in the neighbouring tank or river holding
each other's hand, and are taken in procession to worship the
deity in the village temple amidst the beating of tom-toms and
merry shouts, after which the party return home. The bridegroom
and the bride are taken to the kitchen, which they are
[586] prohibited from entering during the first three days, and there
they dine together. After this, they proceed to the pandal where

the wedding dress is torn and given to the *Chithayan* which 588
signifies the dissolution of marriage. In some places this takes [586]
place on the morning of the fifth day, and instead of this ceremony [465]
the *táli* tier is given a fee of eight annas and is dismissed [431]
with some presents, and in others the cloth is severed into two
parts and each part given to the bridegroom and the bride
separately in the presence of *enangans* and other friends.
Throughout South Malabar, the severing of the cloth on the [184]
fourth day is indispensable and is part of the ceremony, while,
in this State, it is said that the custom is not now in vogue.
The marriage badge is not removed soon after the divorce, but
is worn by the girl till the twenty-eighth day. Some remove
it on the fourth or the fifth day, while others wear it for a week.

In poor families, where this ceremony cannot be performed 588
on a large scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, 735
and the *táli* is tied by the mother with neither feasting nor 184
merriment. In some cases very poor people take their
girls before the deity in the *Trikkákkarappan* temple and tie
the *táli*, and very often do such people perform the ceremony
on the *Onam* day in front of the clay image (*Mahádévar*)
placed in their court-yard.

Where the Thirumulpád is the *táli* tier, he goes through the 588
ceremony for a number of girls, and on receipt of the fee
for his service to each girl, he departs in peace. If the *táli*
tier, whether a Kshatriya or a young man of the *enangu*,
wishes to take her as his wife, he is at liberty to do so
with the consent of her parents; and in that case he has to
celebrate the *sambandham* by giving her presents of cloth.

In South Malabar and the Cochin State, the general 588
belief among the Nayars is, that the bridegroom has a right to 184
marry her if he wills, and the severing of the cloth shows [586]
the dissolution of the marriage tie, which gives her the liberty
to choose anybody else as her husband. It is also understood [833]
that, with the tying of the *táli*, the virginity ceases, and he who
brings or takes her to that stage has a right to cohabit with
her, which he relinquishes on the fourth day of the *Tálikettu*
kalyánam. Further, the woman observes a sort of pollution [765]
for fifteen days for the death of the man who tied the [783]
tali, which proves that he is her husband. In some parts she
merely bathes, and even this has been of late given up.

The following is given to be the explanation of the ceremonial 588
:—There is very little difference between the *Tálikettu* 171

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171 *kalyánam* of the Nayars and the marriage ceremony among other Hindus. All available evidence unmistakably points to the conclusion that the former is, in intention, if not in effect, 533 789 the actual marriage ceremony of the Hindus. The ceremonials in the two cases differ very little; there is, however, one exception, namely, that in the case of Brahmans and others, vedic *mantrams* are recited, while the Nayars are compelled to substitute Brahmani *páttu* (song), which should be uttered in the *Rig védic swaram*. Ever since the institution of this system of marriage in Kerala, these songs have been in existence, and they invoke the blessings of numerous children for the pair. It must also be noted that, among all Brahmans, the wedding ceremony is divided into two parts, namely, the first in which the ceremonials form the chief feature, known as betrothal, and the second, popularly known as consummation or the real marriage. In the case of Nayars and other *marumakkathâyam* Hindus, the *táli* tying ceremony for a girl, which is performed before the first sign of menstruation, refers to the betrothal, and the *sambandham* to the real marriage. There is this important difference that, while the Brahmans perform the ceremony after the selection of a husband and postpone the union of the couple to a future date, the *marumakkathâyam* people perform the ceremony first and select the husband on the second occasion, *i. e.*, when the girl is fit to be united to her husband. Hence the bridegroom in the first ceremony acts the 588 174 585 part of a vicarious husband. But when the husband is ready at hand, it is not unusual for the girl to be actually married on the occasion of *táli* tying. The reason for this departure may have been due to the scarcity of suitable young men in the old troublous times and the consequent difficulty of securing a proper husband for every girl before puberty and the danger of girls being out-casted in default of it. Hence it is that the 182 early legislators have devised this convenient plan to allow every girl to be married in a sense with the necessary religious ceremony, and enable her to remain unmarried for life without being subject to excommunication from caste. This view is supported by the fact, that the Nayars were, till towards the close of the eighteenth century, a fighting race and that there was a great loss of lives in the wars with neighbouring principalities and tribes. As in other matters the letter of the law has been closely followed, without a corresponding adherence to its spirit.

The Brahmanical explanation, though palpably inadequate, is, that marriage is a sort of sacrement of which every maiden must partake in order that she may cleanse her own being from the taint of original sin, accomplish the salvation of her father and her ancestors, and bring forth a son to carry on the domestic worship (*Sacra privata*) of her husband's family. The Brahmans who observed this either imposed this principle on the Nayars, or the Nayars borrowed it from them in the belief that it would lead to social distinction. 578 [783] [177]

Looking on this form of marriage in use, they are not regarded as constituting a religious ceremony or a *samskára* or sacrement in the Hindu or European sense of the word. "There is no officiating priest in attendance, there is no formula to be repeated, there is no *vedic*, *puranic* or religious chant or exhortation, and there is no formal benediction. The essential elements of a Brahmanical marriage, *viz.*, taking the bride by the hand or *Pánigrahanam*, the walking of seven steps or *Saptapati*, and the *hómąm* or sacrifice to the fire, are not to be found among its details. Therefore the marriage customs among *marumakkathdyam* Hindus have no connection with their religious observances such as exists under ordinary Hindu law though several of the details bear a resemblance to a portion of the marriage ritual of the Nambutiris." [1]

Puberty customs (Thirandukuli).

881 The *Thirandukuli* is a celebration when a girl reaches the age of maturity. When a girl comes of age, she is lodged in a separate room where a lamp is lit and a brass pot with a bunch of cocoanut flowers is kept. She has to keep with her a circular plate of brass with a handle, called *vdlkannáti*, literally a looking glass with a handle. The event is proclaimed by a *Kurava* (shouts of joy by women). The women of the neighbouring families, and those of friends and relations visit her, and some of them make presents of cloths. On the third day, the villagers, friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding. Early in the morning of the fourth day, the Mannáns or Vélans (washermen) appear. The girl is anointed with oil, and the tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied round the head and loins. In the company of maidens she leaves the room and the Vélans entertain the party, who soon move on in procession to a neighbouring tank where she wears the cloth washed by a washerman. Then [43] [57+]

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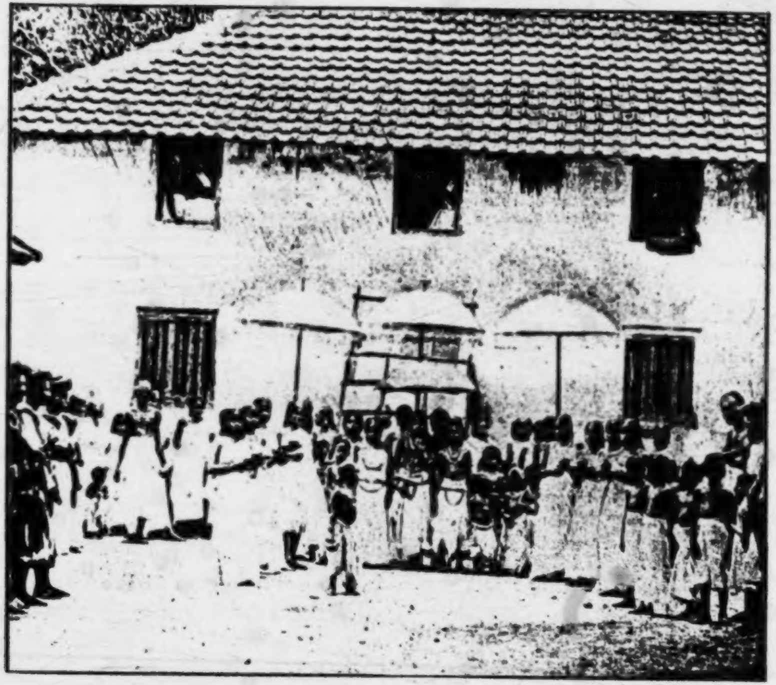
[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 87.

881 she bathes with her friends. The same party return home
in procession, when the *Bráhmani* entertains the party with
her music. In the afternoon, the girl is seated in a pandal
put up in front of the house, where the Vélans continue the
songs, which are *Puranic*, and the assembled guests who are
chiefly the women of the village as also those of their friends and
relatives present the washerman, each with a piece of cloth. They
are entertained at a sumptuous feast held that day; after which
the assembled party break up, taking leave of the host. In
some places, the girl is taken to a separate house on the
fourth day for the bath; whence she returns to her house in
procession together with the beating of drum and joyous shouts.
[184] In the northern parts of the State, the Vélan's songs are at
night, and the performance of the ceremony is compulsory
on the fourth day, In the southern Taluks it is often put off to a
convenient day, before the completion of which, the girl is
prohibited from entering into the kitchen or going to the temple
for worship.

Sambandham.

585 The second or real marriage is the *Sambandham* (the
customary union of man and woman), which
is the principal word denoting the conjugal
relations among the Nayars. It is said that there are seven
forms of this marriage prevailing in Malabar, of which only
[184] two or three are in vogue in the State. The customs con-
nected with each of the latter differ in different places:
[582] nevertheless the main features are the same all over. The best
form of *Sambandham* among the Nayars is that between the
daughter of a maternal uncle and his nephew; but, as a rule
they enjoy very much greater freedom of choice than other
[584] classes of people. The parents or friends of the bride or bride-
[787] groom make the proposal, and the wishes of the *káranavans* of
the two families are invariably consulted after the examination
and agreement of their horoscopes. If the parties agree, an
auspicious day is fixed in consultation with the astrologer. A
few of the caste-men of the village and the friends of the bride-
groom meet together in his house, and they all go in a sort of
procession to the bride's house where they are properly wel-
comed and seated in a conspicuous part of the house. A
portion of the *Rámáyanam* or other sacred book, referring to
[533] marriage and the happy conjugal life attending it, is then read
by the Asán or village school-master. Some music is also
[574] provided for the entertainment of the assembled guests who

[facing p. 29]



A NAYAR GIRL RETURNING HOME IN PROCESSION AFTER BATH ON THE FOURTH DAY AFTER THE FIRST MENSES.

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are treated to a sumptuous dinner, and at the auspicious hour the [533]
bridegroom and his party proceed to a conspicuous part of the
house, where a seat is specially provided for him. On either side [574]
of the seat and a little in front of it, are placed two lighted lamps.
There the bridegroom and the bride make obeisance to the [576]
káranavans and other elderly men present there, distribute
presents of money to the Brahmans who pronounce their bene-
diction upon the conjugal pair. The bridegroom or his [184]
káranavans in the northern parts of the State give her the
wedding dress in which she is dressed. The bride is then
ushered in, either by her mother or by an elderly member of
the family when cloths are given to the bride by the bride-
groom. In some places the bridegroom and his party chew
betel leaf and nut, while they chat with the women. After a
while, the party begins to break up, one by one, wishing the
couple all happiness, and the women, departing one by one,
leaving the couple alone, one of them closing the door from
outside. About daybreak, next morning, the bridegroom de-
parts from the house, leaving under the pillow a sum of money
according to his means. The *sambandham* is now com-
plete. The woman resides in her family, and her husband [591]
visits her there. A few days after this, the bridegroom's mother [431]
or some senior woman of his family sends some cloths including
pávu mundus (superior cloths) and *thórtha mundus* (towels)
and also some gingelly oil for her use during the next six
months. Every six months, she does the same, and on the
festivals of *Onam*, *Vishu* and *Thiruváthira* she is given a little
money, arecanut, betel, tobacco and banana. Before long 585
the women of the bridegroom's family express their wish to 602
see her, and have her brought to their family by a few women
of the former. She stays there for a few days and is sent [431]
back to her own house with presents of ornaments and clothes
from senior women of the house. After this she is at liberty to
visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious.

In the Chittur and Talapilly Taluks of the State as also 585
in the Palghat Taluk of South Malabar, this form of marriage 184
is called *Kidakkóra* or *Kidakka kalyánam* (the bed chamber [635]
ceremony). As part of this ceremony, a declaration is made
by one of the bridegroom's party to the senior female of the
bride's house in the presence of the assembled guests in the
following terms:— " Let this youth visit this damsel for

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912

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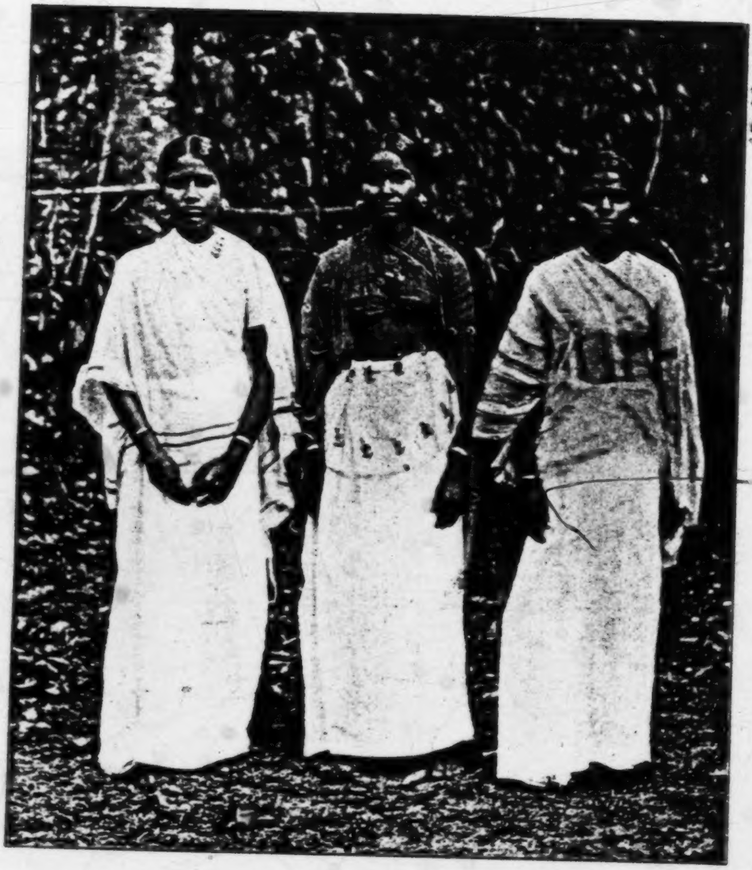
Nayar



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A NAIR GIRL FOR SAMBANDHAM (MARRIAGE) WITH HER BRIDESMAIDS.

[facing p. 31]

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184 six months," and a reply is given in the terms "Be it so". Thus, the permission of the senior lady of the bride's family is asked and given to the bridegroom to visit the bride for a period of six months.

[556] The young men of some aristocratic families who wish to perform ***sambandham*** have the brides brought to them on an auspicious day without any formal ceremony, and henceforth look upon them as their wives.

585 The union is generally effected with the mutual consent, [586] but is terminable at the will of either party. Practically, a [581] marriage thus effected is, in the majority of instances, found as happy and enduring as others more formal and ceremonial.

The following is the account given by the late Mr. Chandu Menon of the ceremonies constituting the marriage among the Nayars of Malabar. It is quoted here, because it is a typical description which covers all forms of the union :—

585 "***Sambandham*** is the principal Malayalam word as ***viváham*** 192 is in Sanskrit. Whatever may be the ***sambandhams*** of the 197 ***marumakkatháyam*** Nayars, there can be no doubt that the idea which the word conveys to a Malayali is the same as the word ***viváham***. The generic term, ***sambandham***, which, in South Malabar between Calicut and Nedunganad, and in Ponnani, Cochin, and parts of Travancore, is the old name to denote marriage includes—

1. ***Guna dósham*** as used in South and North Malabar.
2. ***Pudamuri*** or its Sanskrit synonym for ***Vastradánam*** used in South Malabar.
3. ***Uzhamporukkuka***, and ***Vidáram Kairuga*** of North Malabar.
4. The ***Kidakkóra kalyánam*** of Palghat and parts of Nedunganád.

Pudamuri, ***Vastradánam***, ***Uzhamporukkuka***, ***Vidáram Kiaruga*** are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would hardly be a Malayali who would not really understand what is meant by ***sambandham thudanguka*** (to begin ***sambandham***). The meaning of this phrase which means "to marry" is understood throughout the Keralam in the same way, and there cannot be any ambiguity about it.

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184 It is thus found, that ***sambandham*** is the principal word denoting marriage among the ***marumakkatháyam*** Nayars. It

will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, 585
that the principal features of this *sambandham* ceremony all 184
over Keralam, are, in the main, the same. As there are
different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found
local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the
general features are more or less the same. For instance, the [787]
examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the
bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether the stars agree
astrologically, the appointment of an auspicious day for the
celebration of the ceremony, the usual hours at which the
ceremony takes place, the presentation of the *dánam* (gifts)
to the Brahmans, the sumptuous banquet, the meeting of the
bride and bridegroom, are the features which will invariably
be found in all well conducted *sambandhams* in all parts of
Kéralam alike. But here I would beg to state, that I should
not be understood as saying that each and every one of the
formalities above referred to are gone through at all *sambandhams*
among respectable Nayars, and I would further say,
that they ought to be gone through at every *sambandham*, if
the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the
country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations
to be found in the ceremony of *sambandham*, with the
particular incident attached to certain forms of *sambandham*
in South Malabar. I shall describe the *Pudamuri* or
Vastraḍánam as celebrated in North Malabar, and show how
the other forms of *sambandham* are related to it. I consider the
Pudamuri form the most solemn and the most fashionable in
North Malabar. The preliminary ceremony in every *Pudamuri* is 585
the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom 184
by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride 787
in the presence of the relations of the bride and the bridegroom.
The astrologer, after examination, writes down the
results of his calculation on a piece of palmyra leaf with his
opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it
over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a
day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the marriage.
This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan, one of
which is handed over to the bride's *káranavan* and the other
to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the bride- [574]
groom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the [431]
former also receives presents in the shape of money or
cloth, and this preliminary ceremony is invariably performed

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184 at all *Pudamuris* in North Malabar. It is called *Pudamuri* [787] *Kodukkal* (giving pieces of cloth for dressing), and it is unknown in South Malabar.

Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the *Pudamuri*, the bridegroom visits his *káranavans* and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nut, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset, to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house of the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends, to seats [431] provided in the *tekkini* or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (*dánams*) or money gifts to the Brahmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now the time for the [787] astrologer to appear and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the *patinjáttu* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated and turned into a bed room for the occasion. [354] There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps and *ashtamangalyam* which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangalyam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, lighted fire and a small round wooden box called a *cheppu* made in a peculiar fashion. They will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his best man enters the room through the western door accompanied by the bride's aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the *ashtamangalyam* and lits up lamps, and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom are touched, and the bridegroom immediately leaves the room, as he has to [431] perform another duty. At the *tekkini* or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes and betel leaves and

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nuts, which are also given to all the persons assembled at the 184
place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom re- [431]
tires to the bed room with the bride.

This is an unvarnished account of a *Pudamuri*. Next morning *veetil kettu* or *salkáram* ceremony follows, and the relations of the bridegroom take the bride to the husband's house, where the bride's party are treated to a grand feast ".[1]

The orthodox view of this form of marriage.

The *sambandham* or *Pudamuri* ceremony is not a mar- 585
riage in the legal or sacramental sense of the 564
term. The views of the members of the 184
orthodox community in Malabar, who are the
expounders of the existing customs, are of great ethnographic
importance. It is said that the Nambuthiris consort with
Nayar females by *sambandham*, and precisely the same cere-
mony is gone through whether the husband is a Nambuthiri or
a Nayar. The Nambuthiris do not look upon it as a marriage.
Where a Brahman is a bridegroom, he cannot eat with his Sudra
wife, and is therefore unable to join with his wife in the
wedding feast. There is no comparison of horoscopes. The [831]
aristocracy of the District of Malabar, the Rajas who are admit-
tedly the heads of the Nayar caste, and the Nambuthiris who are
the expounders of religion, opine, that chastity is not one of
the duties prescribed for the Nayar community and *slokas*
(verses) are quoted to prove this. This view is not held in the
Cochin State.

In the Malabar Marriage Commission, one hundred and 586
ninety-seven witnesses admitted the undoubted fact that either
party to the union may terminate it at any time from
wantonness, caprice or any other reason, and that if the couple
joined together by *Pudamuri* were satisfied with one night
of hymeneal bliss, there is no legal impediment to prevent their
separating without any formality on the following morning.
Ninety-one witnesses alleged some formality to be necessary,
and that parties should not separate without the approval of
their *káranavans* or of their relatives or of their caste people.
There was also a small minority (twenty-one witnesses) who [562]
denied to the women the right of divorce which they accorded
to man, assigning as their reason, that, under the Hindu Law,
no woman can be independent. This minority would deprive

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[1] **Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 35-37,**

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562 *marumakkathâyam* of its one great merit, *viz.*, that in sexual matters it places the man and the woman on terms of equality [851] giving equal freedom to both. With practical unanimity, the witnesses admitted that the man may turn away the woman, and that under the *marumakkathâyam* law, he is in no way responsible for the maintenance of the children whom he has begotten upon her. Further, the person that begot a child in a *marumakkathâyam* female was originally regarded as a casual visitor and the sexual relation depended for his continuance on mutual consent.[1]

585 The views expressed above are those of the landed aristo-
556 cracy, and the rulers who were admittedly of the Nayar caste,
564 as also those of the somewhat selfish class of the Nambuthiris,
581 of Malabar, who, to gratify their selfish ends, quote chapter and verse of their own creation in support of the existing custom and teachings, which the Nayars of these days will never submit to. All or nearly all of them cling to one wife for life, and with them *sambandham* is the real marriage, *de facto* and *de jure*. This is the real state of affairs in the States of Cochin and Travancore as well as in British Malabar.
581 The present and growing tendency in all cases, in which, a man, whether a Nambuthiri or a Nayar, consorts with a Nayar woman, is to look upon her as the true wife, and the children of such unions are looked upon as theirs and duly provided for, so far as their means permit. The statement is to a certain extent confirmed by Mr. Logan, who was the Collector of Malabar for many years and thus had ample opportunities of knowing a great deal of Malabar and its people. He says, "this part of Malabar has, in the hands of unenquiring commentators, brought much undeserved obloquy on the morality of the people. The fact, at any rate, of recent years, is that, although the theory of the law sanctions freedom in these relations, conjugal fidelity is very general. Nowhere is the marriage tie, albeit, informal, more rigidly observed or respected, nowhere is it more jealously guarded or its neglect more savagely avenged. Their very looseness of the law makes the individual observances closer, for people have been watchful over the things they are most liable to lose. The absence of a ceremonial has encouraged the popular impression, but a ceremonial,

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 38 to 44.

like other conventionalities, is an accident, and the Nayar 581
women are as chaste and faithful as their neighbours, just as [181]
they are as modest as their neighbours, although their national [291]
costume does not include some of the details required by
conventional notions of modesty."[1] Nevertheless, the existing
state of things in the community does not quite satisfy the
sentiments of the educated public. There was a loud
cry for reform and legislation in British Malabar. The 648
Madras Government appointed a commission, which, after its 582
protracted labours, enacted a permissive law, Act IV of 1896. 585
The main provisions of the Bill are, that, when a *sambandham* has been registered, it shall have the incidence of a legal
marriage; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled [428]
to maintenance by the husband or father respectively and to
succeed to half his self-acquired property if he dies intestate,
while the parties to such a *sambandham* cannot register a
second one during its continuance. The law does not extend
to this State. The fewness of the number of marriage registrations shows how little the Nayars, as a community, have
availed themselves of it. The principal objections urged against 177
it are: (1) that it ignores caste and customary restrictions on 582
marriage and thereby interferes with caste; (2) that it sanc- 585
tions what according to social usage is deemed to be
incestuous marriage; (3) that marriage before the Registrar
is obnoxious to the people, and that no one has any
scruples about going through the customary form; (4) that
the provisions relating to divorce are ill-adapted to the present
state of society in Malabar, and that revelations of conjugal
infidelity in public courts are the most repulsive to the people;
(5) that the provisions relating to the giving of the whole of [428]
the self-acquired property to wives and children amount to
violent interference with the customary law. The following
extract from Moore's Malabar Law and Customs is well worth
the perusal[2]:—

From the date on which the Act in Malabar came into force up to 31st March 1910, one hundred *sambandhams* have been registered. "In his last report of the working of the Act, the Registrar-General states, that the number of notices of

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[1] Logan's Manual of Malabar, Vol. I, page 136.

[2] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 15.

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585 intentions to register *sambandhams* was thirty-six in 1896—97, twenty-four in 1897—98 and only fourteen in 1898—99. " He accounts for the falling off as follows :—

The mass of the people continues to regard the marriage law with aversion and suspicion, and even the educated members of the community who are in favour of the measure, shrink from taking advantage of it from fear of offending the elderly members of their *tarawids*, and all the powerful Nambuthiris and other great landlords. The Registrar of Calicut also points out, that the power conferred by the marriage law, to make provision for one's own wife and children, has hitherto acted as some inducement to persons to register their *sambandhams*, but as Act V of 1898 (Madras) which came into force from 2nd September 1898, enables the followers of the *marumakkathdyam* law to attain this object without registering their *sambandhams*, and "unnecessarily curtailing their liberty of action, and risking the chances of divorce proceedings," he thinks it unlikely that registration under the marriage law would increase in future.

Polyandry

595 Among the Nayars of ancient times in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore, there was polyandry. In the report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, it is said, that there is evidence to show that it still lingers in Ponnani and Walluvanad Taluks, especially on the Cochin border of the former Taluk.[1] Apart from its existence in former times, it may be said that nowhere in these States is the custom still found to linger, no admitted instance of it has come to my notice in the course of my investigations into the customs and manners of the castes in the various parts of the State. An account of these customs as it existed in ancient times, and the theories that have been advanced in respect of it are of some ethnographical importance, and it may not be out of place here.

[593]
[604]
[582]
[564] The Nayars of ancient times were, in most cases, neither regularly married, nor did they care much, when married, to support their wives and children ; but their nephews (sons of sisters), who were their legitimate heirs, were properly looked after. Nayar women generally mated with Brahmans or Nayars, but never with people of lower caste under pain of death

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 83.

death. At ten or twelve years of age of a girl, her mother 595 begged some one of their relations to marry her, and they did so [588] by tying a mariage badge (*tali*). Then the bridegroom would leave her and go away without any consideration of his new relationship. She might also remain with him if he wished it. If she was not inclined to do so, the mother would then go about seeking some one to take her daughter to live with him. If the girl happened to be pretty, three or four Nayars would agree to live with her, and the more lovers she had, the more highly was she esteemed. Each man had his appointed time from midday to the next day at the same hour, during which some signal was placed at the door so that the others might not enter. She was at liberty to dismiss whomsoever she disliked. The advantage of this system was, that a man, who had not the means to support a wife, might have only a share of the cost of the maintenance. Nevertheless, there was a difficulty in ascertaining the fathers of children, who generally lived with the mothers by whom they were brought up. The fathers, in such cases, were named by the mothers. It is said that the kings made this law in order that the Nayars might not abandon their service. According to this [604] system, the fathers were not succeeded by their sons but by nephews (sons of sisters). The above is a summarised account [175] from 'The Travels on the East coast of Africa and Malabar' by Duarte Barbosa, from those of Lodovico Varthema, as also from the voyage of Frankoy Pyrard, page 371.

Origin of the custom of polyandry.

The orthodox view or rather the traditional account 595 according to the *Keralamahatmyam*,[1] is that 773 certain celestial damsels were brought from the world of Indra by Parasurama to satisfy the sexual cravings of the Kerala Brahmans; and that at Vrishabhadri (Trichur), he pronounced his commandment to the *Sdmanthan* and *Sudra* castes to gratify the desires of the said Brahmans, ordering them to put off chastity and the cloth which covered their breasts, and declaring that promiscuous intercourse with three or four men in common was devoid of the least taint of sin. This is certainly a very convenient arrangement for the 595 junior members of the Nambuthiri families to be relieved of [564] their life-long bachelorhood (*Bramhacharyam*) without any

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 17.

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564 responsibility to support their wives and children from their
[184] family property. Whether it was introduced by the Nambuthiris,
it is difficult to believe; and it is to be noted, that it was prevailing to a considerable extent in North Malabar, among whom and other low castes their influence was less than in South Malabar and the Cochin State.

83 The *Smriti* says, "the Sudras' appointed path to Heaven
564 is serving the Brahmans". "The practice of Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, having sexual intercourse with the servile women is in accordance with the *sástrás*. If a Brahman wish to have sexual intercourse with a Sudra wife, the Sudra is bound to gratify the wish. A Sudra cannot be sure of the true parentage of his children". Again, before the Malabar Marriage Commission, the Zamorin Maharaja Bahadur, Ettan Thampuran Avergal, a learned Sanskrit scholar, Kolattúr Váriar and other respectable witnesses unanimously deposed, that, in Kerala, a non-Brahman or *marumakkatháyam* woman need not be chaste, and she is not forbidden to consort with more than one man. To such teachings of the learned and influential leaders
[178] of the orthodox community, the Nayars of these days will no longer submit.

595 Another important theory connects the practice with the
701 military organisation of the Nayar community. Montaigue was evidently of opinion, that it was introduced, because the Nayar leaders looked upon an army of bachelors as the most effective instrument in war.[2] The subjection of the males of
[833] a whole race from the earliest youth to the decline of manhood must therefore have been the cause of the fugitive connection and promiscuous intercourse.

174 European writers, such as Baron Avebury, Meyr, Mc. Linan,
and others, have arrived at the conclusion, that the system of
595 inheritance now prevalent among the Nayars must have originated from a type of polyandry resembling free love. In
[591] ancient times, the rule was that the wife should remain in
[592] her own house and be visited by her husband, and that the eldest female was at the head of the house, which was afterwards transferred to the eldest male. The part of man in the
[842] function of generation passed as of secondary importance or as

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 17.

[2] Essays of Michael Montaigue,

impossible to determine. It was under the influence of the tangible fact of maternity, that the notions of race, family and inheritance were elaborated and developed. Against this is the fact, that the jungle tribes and very low castes have a regular system of marriage and a kind of paternal inheritance. 174 595 [842]

Sir Henry Mayne maintains that the origin of society in patriarchal lines, is that polyandry and kinship through females are of temporary duration, liable to be brought about at any stage in the progress of society by peculiar circumstances under which it may be placed. If this were true, the popular belief that Nambuthiris brought it about to accommodate their domestic habits is easily proved.

Letourneau says that there is no warrant to consider this form of conjugal union as having been general, but that it is in exceptional form brought about by necessity in a good number of gross societies. This view to some extent is shared by Herbert Spencer who says that polyandry is one form of marital relations or arrangements independently originating in the earliest societies by successive limitations of promiscuity. Lastly, the opinion is unanimous that the Nayars and other *marumakkathdyis* are Dravidians and that polyandry and its accompanying incidents prevailed in Southern India among the non-Aryan tribes. There is strong reason to think, that the *tâli* tying ceremony, the prohibition of sexual union outside the caste, and the doctrine of *Anulomam* and *Pathilomam* were orginally introduced by Nambuthiri Brahmans as restrictions on promiscuities. Thus, sodifferent are the views of anthropologists on this subject, that it still remains an unsettled problem in the ethnology of Kerala. As has been already said, the custom of polyandry is dead. The women of the upper and middle classes are monogamous, and marriage in practice amply satisfies the definition of Lord Penzance in Hyde v. Hyde, namely," the voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all other".

Polygamy.

There is nothing which prevents a man from entering into conjugal relations with more than one woman at a time; nevertheless, it is seldom practised. Indeed, when a man feels happy and contented with his own wife, very seldom has he any inclination to form *sambandham* with another for the sake of novelty unless forced by the 595

595 [554] circumstances of his matrimonial life. If however he do so, his family and society will not recognise it as such, and no woman of any respectability will enter into such an alliance.

Duration of conjugal union.

586 According to the customary rules of *sambandham*, the relationship between husband and wife, ceases at the will and pleasure of either party; but in practice, such dissolution of marriage is of rare occurrence. The woman generally does not leave her husband, while the man may send her away [613] whenever he chooses to do so. Marriage can be dissolved only with the consent of the *káranavans* or the other elders of the family. There are certain formalities to be observed in this connection, which vary in detail in different places, but some secret act indicating the intention of repudiation seems necessary before the divorce. In the event of the husband trying to effect a separation from his wife, he sends two or three respectable men to give intimation to the *káranavan* of the wife's family setting forth his reason for so doing. If the wife wishes to terminate the *sambandham*, she brings it to the notice of the *káranavan*, and with his consent tells the husband in the presence of her relatives the reasons for discarding 184 him. In the northern parts of the State, especially in the Chittur Taluk, the prevailing custom is to send for the husband and two of the fellow caste-men and to declare the reluctance of the woman to continue as wife, in the presence of these men. In some cases, instead of the formal declaration of the dissolution of marriage, certain conduct on the part of the parties is tantamount to such a declaration, such, for instance, as the failure by the husband or his family to send the usual presents to the family of the wife for *Onam*, *Vishu* and *Thiruváthira*, the refusal of the wife's people to accept them when sent, the failure to pay for wife's sustenance attended with deliberate omission to visit her, the deliberate absence for three consecutive nights with the consent of the elders from her husband's room. As a rule, no dissolution is allowed unless the cases for the same are enquired into and discussed by guardians and relations. Though a woman [626] is free to marry and to dissolve the union, yet, as a rule, she never does so. The fear of social disgrace and self interest [184] stand in the way of a woman's attempt to separate from her [582] husband. In Cochin as well as in South Malabar, the women

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are allowed greater freedom in the choice as well as in the 582
divorce of husbands (*sambandhakárans*), and the females in the
family do not interfere in their freedom so long as it does not 586
produce any domestic scandal. The orthodox view is that, as the
woman is not independent, she seldom thinks of relinquishing [684]
the husband. Arbitrary divorce is thus discouraged, and adultery is a grave social offence. A wife, who is disputatious, [689]
who steals her husband's property, who favours another than
her husband, who converses with strangers, who is gluttonous, 586
who enters strange houses, should be put away even though
she may have born ten sons. Litigation between two families [578]
and disagreement between a husband and wife are also the causes. [684]
Social stigma follows the adulterer, and the adulteress loses her [626]
status in society.

Pulikudi.

A Nayar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during 843
her first pregnancy. First during and after
the seventh month of pregnancy, she bathes
and worships the deity in the temple every morning, and eats
before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter, over which
holy *mantrams* have been recited by the temple priest or by
Nambuthiris. This is done generally till delivery. *Pulikudi*
(tamarind juice drinking) is an indispensable ceremony performed for every pregnant woman, by the rich and poor alike,
on an auspicious day, in the ninth month of pregnancy.
An auspicious day, nay, even the very hour, is fixed by the [787]
astrologer. The ceremony opens by the planting of a twig of
the *ambázha* tree (Spondias mangifera) on the morning of the [824]
day of the ceremony in the inner court-yard (*nadumittam*) or
the northern wing of the house. At the appointed hour
(*muhúrtam*), the pregnant woman, after having been bathed
and properly attired, is conducted to the northern block
of the house (*vatikkini*) where she is seated facing eastwards. The *Ammáyi* or the uncle's wife, whose presence [604]
on the occasion is essential, goes to the court-yard, and
plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few
drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the
brother, or uncle, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is neces- [301]
sary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right hand [593]
ring-finger. Holding a country knife (*pisánkatti*) in his
left hand, with its point towards the north, he pours the [411]
tamarind juice over his knife with his right hand three times

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The juice dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks
[602] it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates.
After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked
[824] to pick one grain out of several packets of different grains
placed before her. The grain in the packet is supposed to
[574] declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremony
is wound up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and
[787] friends of the family. The *enangan's* wife at the time pours oil
over the head of the pregnant woman. If the oil flows on the
left side, it predicts the birth of a female; if on the right side, a
male.

Childbirth.

844 When a Nayar woman is about to become a mother, she is placed in a reclining position on a low wooden couch (*kattódom*), her back supported by a companion, generally an old woman. The *kattódom* is very like, if not identical with, the couch on which the Nayar woman has her oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat. Lying on her back, the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling by
[564] way of support. The child is received by a woman of the
barber caste, who generally officiates as midwife, and in some
places this duty is performed by a woman of the Vélan caste.
846 Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears cloths, washed and presented her by *Vannáthi* (a woman of the washerman caste). On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Athikurussi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow (*panchagavyam*) with gingelly seeds. Then the woman dips herself in a tank or river or sits on the ground near the bank, and a maid servant pours on her head the water from a vessel as many as
[184] twenty-one times. This practice is not universal, though it
certainly obtains in the State and in some parts of South
Malabar and Travancore.

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852 It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new born baby has also to undergo some rite of purification. The baby is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it

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and takes it in his hands. The belief is, that the temperament 852
of the child is determined by that of the person who thus [828]
sprinkles the water. All the members of the *tarawād* observes [613]
pollution for fifteen days immediately after the delivery, during [783]
which period they are prohibited from entering temples and
holy places.

First birth-day celebration.

The twenty-seventh day after the childbirth or the first 553
recurring day of the star under which it was [853]
born, is an important day, on which the
kāranavan of the family gives to the child [613]
a spoonful or two of milk mixed with sugar and slices of plantain
fruits reduced to a kind of pulp. Then he names the child
calling it in the ear by name, three times. In some places the nam- 553
ing ceremony takes place in the sixth month on the *Chórúnu* 574
day, *i. e.*, on the day of feeding. This is followed by a feast [613]
to all friends and relations, the expenses of which are met
by the *kāranavan* of the *tarawād*. The child is not fed on 853
rice for some time after birth, the practice being to give it the
flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery. There is a particular
variety of plantain known as *kunnan* used for this purpose.
Well-to-do parents in these days give Mellin's food.
The staple food, which is rice, is given to the child for the 852
first time, generally during the sixth month, and is, of course, 853
attended with some ceremony. Necessarily, the astrologer
fixes the day, and at the auspicious hour, the child is bathed and
adorned (which is the duty of the father), is brought and laid
on a plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a bright
brass lamp is placed near. On the leaf are served a small
quantity of cooked rice, generally a portion of the rice offered
to some temple divinity, some tamarind, salt, chillies and sugar.
Then the *kāranavan* or the father ceremoniously sits down [613]
facing the child. First he puts into the mouth of the child, a
mixture of tamarind, chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly
a little sugar. Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the
child is rice. The ceremony is, in some cases, preferably per- [778]
formed in some famous temple, that at Guruvayur being a
favourite one for this purpose. A few annas is given to the [782]
priest, who gives a small quantity of the food offered to the [465]
deity, with which the child is fed.

551. The names of Nayars present great varieties and those most commonly met with are the following:—

(a) Andi Menon
Kandar Menon
Kannan Menon
Ittirayarachan
Korappan
Koman Menon
Kumara Menon
Thenchu Menon
Konthu Nayar
Eacharan Nayar

(b) Raman
Krishnan
Govindan
Gopalan
Achyuthan
Sankaran
Narayanan
Madhavan
Sreedharan
Raghavan
Neelacandhan
Velayudhan

(c) Names of females:
Kunjikavu
Chirutha
Ichon
Kotha
Nangeli
Ooli
Cheeru
Cheeronna
Ichi
Ittiri
Mukami
Oonni Maya

(d) Kalyani
Lakshmi
Madhavi
Rugmani
Seetha
Subhadra
Narayani
Dakshayani
Karthyayani
Meenakshi
Gowri
Bhargavi
Janaki
Parvathi
Sreedevi

(e) Pet names of males:
Appu
Appukuttan
Kuttan
Balan

(f) Pet names of females:
Nani *(Narayani)*
Mathu *(Madhavi)*
Kunju (Kunjukutti)
Eacheri *(Easwari)*
Parukutti.

55 The names of males given under (a) are those which appear
564 to be caste names, probably given by the Nambuthiris, who are generally fond of these contracted and disguised appellations. The Nambuthiris say, that the Sudras were so ordained by Manu as not to be called by fair names. They were the landlords and priests, and the Nayars had to do servile work for them. They thought that they ought to keep the Sudras in complete ignorance, and could not endure to hear them talking distinctly in their presence. On one occasion, it is said that when a Sudra servant uttered the words "*Súrya Rasmi* (sun's rays)," his master was so displeased, that he closed his ears, for he could not bear to hear a servile fellow using so elegant a phrase from Sanskrit. On another occasion, when a Brahman overheard a Sudra uttering the words *ahimsa paramo dharma* (the highest of all duties is not to injure anybody), he said to himself, "what a pity it is, that a Sudra should be able to quote a vedic expression!". Their influence in these and other matters began gradually to diminish after the time of the great Malayalam
[776] peot, Thunjathu Rámanujan. The names of the caste-men given under (b) are chiefly the various designations of Krishna, Rama and Siva, all of whom are worshipped with equal rever-
[782] ence. Some think that the Nayars are chiefly the worshippers of Vishnu, but the fact that, when at Benares, Rameswaram and
[769] other places, they perform the ceremonies of offering of rice-balls in honour of their deceased ancestors, calling their ancestors

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Sivagothrakár (worshippers or followers of Siva), would seem to 564 indicate that they reverence Siva more than Vishnu. [782]

A Nayar tarawad or marumakkathayam family.

"No people" says Elie Reclus, "have more fully appre- [769] ciated the maternal family, nor developed it 613 more logically than the Nayars, despite the 592 accumulated obstacles thrown in its way by a race admirably intelligent and moreover victorious "[1] The *tarawád* or *marumakkathayam* family consists in theory of all persons who can trace their descent in the female line from a single ancestress. In its simplest form it is one which consists of mother and her children, living together with their maternal uncle, that is the mother's brother, as *káranavan* or the senior male member of the family. In its complex form it consists of a mother and all her children, both male and female, all her grand children by her daughters, all her brothers and sisters and the descendants on the sisters' side,—in short, all the relatives of the woman on the female side, however distant their relationship, living together in the same block of buildings, dining together in the same hall and enjoying all the property in common. No descendant through the male line can be a member of such a family. There are at present instances of families containing a hundred or more members who live in one or more buildings situated in a large compound and who are the descendants of one woman separated perhaps by generations of descent, and yet able to trace their common descent from one ancestress.

In such a family the woman senior to others in age was originally mistress or head of the family, and she reigned or governed. Her eldest daughter was prime minister in the family, and through her all orders were transmitted to her little world. The son recognised the priority of the mother before whom he did not even venture to seat himself, unless she had given him permission. The brother obeyed the elder [593] sister, and respected the younger ones. In fact, the affection [581] between brother and sister was a feeling that endured, while conjugal love was but a passing sentiment. The wives of brothers and sons held but a secondary position in the family. The Nayars loved their families more than [842] anything else in the world, and made it the end of their existence. Like all Hindus they held reprehensible the man who

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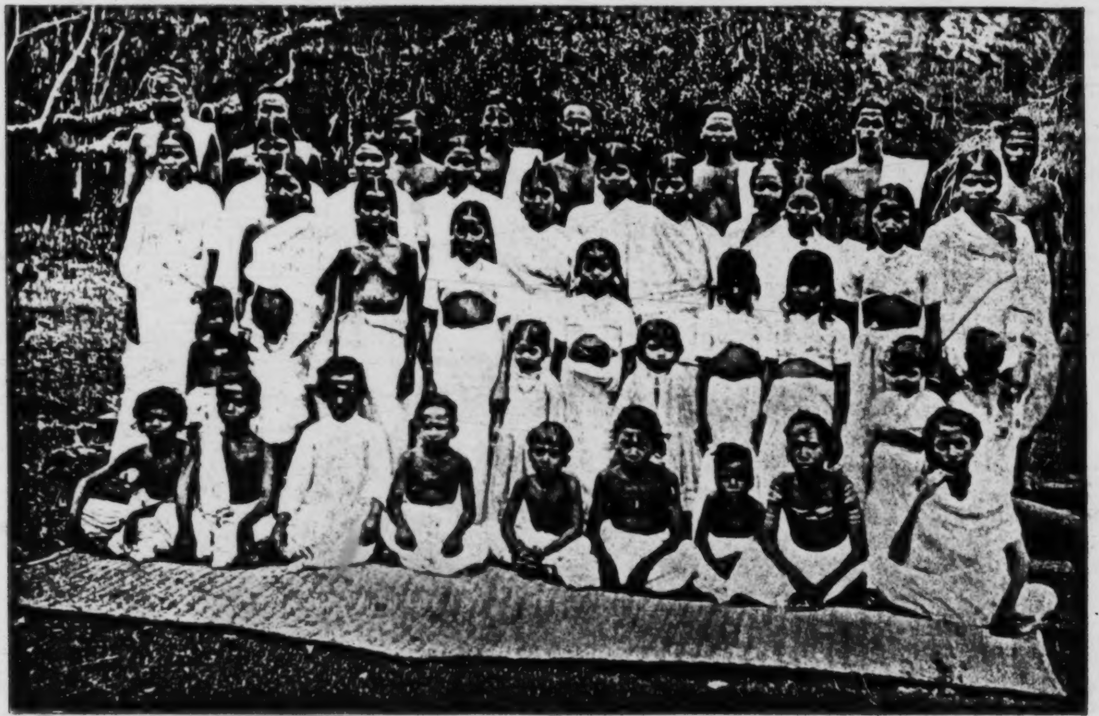
[1] Primitive folk, page 159.

9:Iyer E-4,5 (ca.1902-1906)1912
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

[facing p. 47]



A TYPICAL NAYAR FAMILY.

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592 [842] deliberately refused to be a father and deprived himself of the
sweet cares involved by the rearing of the children, they were
indignant with a girl who refused to be a mother, and those who
had not reproduced their species were considered to be subject to
613 terrible punishments in the next world. The old order of things
592 has given place to the new. Many of the old time-honoured
178 customs have already disappeared or begun to disappear. The
senior woman is no longer the head of the family, and she has
given place to the eldest male member who is known as *kdranavan.*
592 In a joint family which contains a large or fairly a large num-
613 ber of females and males, the former with their children occupy
the main building or buildings and the latter live apart in
another edifice close to and separated from them. Each of
the married women has a room or two; and here her husband
visits her. The old women and others occupy the common
[851] portion of the house. The boys under age live with their
mother under whose care they always are, and the father as a
casual visitor does not generally concern himself with the
[591] rearing of children. These, after coming of age, join the
the adult members, and if they can afford it, live in houses of
their own with their wives and children. Where the domestic
environments are favourable and the influence of the *kára-
navan* (as the father in a patriarchal family) and other senior
member prevails, the junior members seldom go wrong. In
some cases where such influences do not exist, their conduct
592 is not always satisfactory. The habits of the members are
613 generally regular, and the usual time of rising throughout the
592 year is early dawn. After rising, the males either go to
their daily routine, or wait for their morning light meal which
they partake after bathing and after worshipping the deity
[264] in the local temple. The women attend to their children,
look to the domestic minor work, bathe and prepare the break-
[515] fast. Great attention is paid to their personal cleanliness.
As water is near at hand, men, women, and children take
a great pleasure in bathing, which, besides being conducive
to cleanliness, is also considered purificatory and curative.
[264] Their substantial dinner is, as a rule, a little before midday,
[574] and the rest of the day is occupied by the women and
others either in the perusal of religious books or in the
playing of some indoor game, while visits in the afternoon
are also indulged in.

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are also indulged in. In these days of modern civilization, 592
when schools for boys and girls have increased in [871]
the State, many take advantage of the instruction imparted
in them, so that when the latter become adults, they profitably
spend their leisure hours in reading religious and other
books. Towards the evening they go to the temple for worshipping [788]
and go round it several times, which, though hygienic
in its origin, is considered of religious importance. They return [264]
home, and their supper is generally before eight o'clock; after
this they retire to their rooms, each married woman occupying
her separate room or set of rooms. They lie on mats or beds [573]
spread on the floor or on the latter placed on cots with which [352]
the rooms are neatly furnished. Such in brief is the family [556]
life and organisation of well-to-do families of the Nayars. In
poor families in which the members subsist by hard work, [184]
the daily routine of life considerably differs from those described [735]
above.

Mention has already been made of the *káranavan*, who is the 613
manager of all affairs in the Nayar family. He is legally responsible 421
for the proper management of the joint property, for the 592
education of the junior members and for everything conducive to the general welfare and happiness of every member of the family. It must be remembered that the family property is joint property and that no member can claim that any portion of it belongs to him or to her, nor can any individual member claim a separate possession or enjoyment of any portion. The ground-work of the system is, that the family property is held in trust for the support of the females and their descendants in the female line. The property is impartible and the family is indissoluble except with the consent of all its members. When, in course of time, the family becomes too unwieldy to be governed and managed by one man, the circumstances and natural forces bring about a division of the family into various distinct sections or families. These separate families keep up the original traditions of their common descent, but have no legal right to the property of one another. The members of the family and their descendants in the female line, thus separated by partition from the main stock, form a *távazhi* (*ta*=mother, *vazhi*=line, *i. e.*, mother's line). They live in a separate building and own that portion of the joint property which is theirs in the partition, and which is managed

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[421] by the woman's brother or some other senior member as *káranavan*.

There are some who love and admire the system, and they depict the *tarawád* as a group of males and females bound together by the sacred tie of common descent from one ancestors' grand-mother. "The females have only to follow the natural instinct to be fruitful and to multiply, while the males, free from all care for their own progeny, are expected to labour like the honey bee for the common good of the *tarawád*-hive, and pour their earnings into the lap of the venerable *káranavan*, who, in the exercise of absolute discretion, administers the income for the benefit of all. Protected by the impartibility of the estate, refreshed by the acquisitions of the junior members, and under the beneficent sway of the senior male, the *tarawád* would rise high and endure through generations."[1] The advantages of such a complete joint family system are three-fold: firstly, the genial society it affords, the closest association of young and old, and the abundant opportunity for recreation and instruction; secondly, in the process of production many of the advantages of concerted labour are secured, as is obvious, without carelessness, dishonesty or misdirected production and consumption; and thirdly, there is the remarkable saving in the process of consumption. [562] The freedom and independence of Nayar women, their influence in the family and the absence of conventional restrictions, such as child marriage, enforced widowhood and the other customs which exercise so baneful an influence upon Hindu society elsewhere are other advantages that add to the excellence of the Nayar system of life.

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178 The system above described, may have worked smoothly enough in former days; but in these days of civilization, with the growing wants of the members, coupled with the indifference and selfishness of the *káranavan* and the other members, the joint family tends to disintegration. At a certain point the mere increase of the members renders it intolerable for them all to live together under one roof, and when that stage is reached, the *tarawád* splits up into *távazhis*, each containing a mother, her brothers and her children.

562] It is to the woman that the fortune of the family belongs, and yet she is not the mistress of the house but only one

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 44.

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of many joint members dependent on the *káranavan*. The 592
females and the junior members pass their lives in utter 182
discontent and misery, if the *káranavan* happens to be unsym- 178
pathetic and tyrannical. The father is not the legal guardian [562]
of his children, for whose training and education the *káranavan* is responsible. In families, where there are many boys and girls, the chances are that he educates none of them, on the plea that he cannot afford to educate them all, nor can he make any
invidious distinction. The family, in certain cases, becomes the [578]
seat of envy, hatred and dissensions, and not a day passes without some dispute or other among the members. It is said that with the advancement of civilization the system becomes more and more unworkable ; it offends against every principle of economy, healthy life and natural affection. By freeing a man from the obligation of maintaining his wife and children, it sanctions the reckless propagation of species, destroys the motive power for prudence and foresight, forces up the population to the very point where it must be kept down by actual want of means of subsistence. It "huddles together" as a family a number of distant relatives not necessarily drawn to each other by any bond of natural affection. It makes home life impossible, for the father is a casual visitor, and mother and children are but units in a heterogeneous flock, dependent on a practically irresponsible guardian, who from a mere accident of his being the eldest of the flock is expected to be able to regard every member with an impartial eye, and at the same time preserve the interests of his wife and children.[1] These causes are at work and tend to divide the families into several branches in the direction of *tavazhis* by partition. Fortunately, in the Cochin State, such evils as those above described are of rare occurrence, for partition is effected as early as the symptoms of disunion and ill-feeling among the members are visible.

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 48.

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CHAPTER III.

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(*Continued*).

592 The Nayars follow the *marumakkatháyam* law of succession, *i. e.*, the law which regulates succession through the female line. The senior male member called the *káranavan* is entitled to the full possession of the property, and is absolute in its management. The junior members, on the other hand, have a claim to residence and maintenance in the family house. They cannot call for an account except as an incident to a prayer for the removal of the manager for gross misconduct, nor claim any specific share of the income, nor even require that the maintenance provided for them should be in proportion to the income of the *tarawád*. An absolute discretion in this direction is vested in the manager who is the legal guardian of every member of the family.[1] He is not accountable to any member in the *tarawád* in respect of its income, nor can a suit be maintained for an account of the *tarawád* property in the absence of fraud on his part. He is under no obligation to support any member of his *tarawád* by his own labour or from his self-acquisitions. The only restraint on him in the management is, that he cannot alienate the lands of the family except with the consent of all the other members and without proper necessity.[2] If a family has so far increased in the number of its members that they cannot conveniently live under the same roof any longer, it divides itself with the consent of the senior member into *távazhis* to each of which is assigned a portion of the property for maintenance, and such *távazhis* may reside in separate houses or farm-houses belonging to the family and appropriating from the lands newly assigned to them an income sufficient to maintain themselves. In the partition of

613 Inheritance.

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[1] Vide Mayne's Hindu Law, sec. 268,

[2] I. L. R. II, Mad. 328.

a Nayar *tarawád*, all the members are equally entitled to a 592
share. The self-acquisitions of each member of a *tarawád* 613
are at his absolute disposal during his life-time, but this right [421]
lapses to the *tarawád* on his death.[1] In families where the
káranavans look after the welfare of each individual member
and the savings of the junior members go to increase the wealth
of the family, there is peace and prosperity. Such families 592
are rarely found in these days. Times are changed, as also 613
the conditions of the community, and the old and large 182
families ~~are~~ disappearing through mismanagement. In the
majority of cases, when the senior member takes up the management, he is too old and unfit to govern a score of men and women younger than himself and bound to him by no natural tie of affection. He often becomes a mere puppet in the hands of an unscrupulous but stronger member while the other members of the *tarawád* suffer from the injustice consequent under such circumstances. In some cases he misappropriates the family property and alienates it in favour of his wife and children, and the gross acts of spoliation carried on by *káranavan* have reduced some of the respectable families in Malabar and elsewhere to poverty and misery. It is also said, that the junior members are disobedient and do not work for the common good and this state of things is also common everywhere. Another cause for the downfall of the ancient family system is the growing disinclination among its junior members to work for the common good of the *tarawád* and their dislike to the rule of the *káranavan*.[2]

The Nayars who follow this *marumakkatháyam* law of [611]
inheritance include nearly all the aristocracy of the country, [556]
but the notion that every *tarawád* has an estate sufficient to
feed an indefinite number of souls is unfounded and erroneous. Most of the families are poor, and the *káranavans* are mere tenant farmers cultivating a few acres of land on a precarious tenure, and a law which requires such a man, from the produce of his farm, to feed and provide for all the descendants of his female relatives from the time of their birth to their death, whether they work or not, is one of those laws which continue to exist in name but are actually disregarded in practice.[3]

Tribal organisation.

In ancient times the rulers of Cochin held supreme sway 631
in the territories which belonged to them. 643
There were no regular councils, nor assemblies;

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[1] II, Mad. H. C. R. 162.

[2] and [3]. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 49-51.

631 and the Rajas were mostly guided by their own will and plea-
643 sure unless it ran counter to the customs of the country. Many
[644] of them had learned Brahmans to instruct them in the fundamental and long established laws of the country.

646 Certain checks upon their arbitrary power existed in the form of general assemblies of the nation, but these were seldom held. These were of two kinds: those assembled under the orders of the Raja, and those assembled by the spontaneous will of the people. In the former case, messengers, who by
[203] right of birth and descent were entitled to that office, were despatched in all directions to summon the people. When
[428] assembled, they sat in a circle in the open air, while a number of Nayars kept guard over them. The propositions were then discussed, and the measures proposed were rejected or adopted by the unanimous silence or clamour of those present, but in affairs of minor importance not affecting the welfare of the whole community, the chiefs of the nation were summoned, and they decided the questions laid before them.

643 The assemblies summoned by the will of the nation were
646 conducted in much the same manner, but with more impetuo-
578 sity. They were held only in cases of emergency, when the Raja was guilty of extreme tyranny or of gross violation of the law. Then all the landed proprietors were bidden to attend, and if any one dared to refuse to obey the summons, the assembly
[687] sentenced his houses, gardens or estates to be devastated. If he persisted in his disobedience, he would be deprived of his privileges and votes, and might even be sentenced to banishment. As the object of such assemblies was to thwart the will of the ruler, he on his side did all he could to obstruct their holding such assemblies. The Raja had no right nor power to prevent them by force of arms, but he sent *Pandara Patti* (servants of the rulers) to provoke them with all manner of annoyances and to pelt them with stones, sand, and dirt. The Nayars on guard did their best to keep off the assailants with their shields, and, if any one of them, provoked beyond endurance, were to strike or hurt one of the youths, it would be regarded as treason, and, as such, the assembly would be liable to a heavy fine and would be deprived of its inviolability. The Raja might then disperse them by force of arms; but if he failed to subdue them, they would all desert their allegiance. Allies and neighbours did their best to intercede between the parties and to secure for everyone his proper
rights.

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rights. Thus did these *kúttams* (assemblies) exercise a whole- 646
some influence, and act as a powerful check upon the rulers
and ministers of the middle ages.[1] They also dealt with wider
questions of castes and other matters affecting the welfare of
the people. In former times there were also minor councils 623
of *Pramânis* or leaders of the people in every *Desam* exercising
similar social functions. A survival of this system even now
exists in every village, and their deliberations and decisions
upon social matters and caste disputes have great weight. In
important matters such as the outcasting of a member of the
caste, etc., His Highness the Raja who has always been the [643]
social as well as the political head of the State would deliberate [692]
upon them with the help of the Brahman *vaidiks*, and his deci-
sions become final. The individual who is placed under a ban [688]
is prohibited from entering any temple, bathing in the public
tanks, and is, in short, ostracised.

Administration of Justice.

The Rajas were in former times the fountain of all justice, 643
but were assisted by *Karyakkars* or ministers 692
and Brahmans in administering it. All caste 623
disputes and offences were left to the caste assemblies to deal
with, while civil disputes were either left to the arbitration of 681
the caste assemblies or of three or four prominent men. There 564
was no written code, but the punishments assigned by custom [671]
fitted the crimes, and they varied with the status of the caste
and of the person. The nobles enjoyed the privilege of freedom
from confinement. The Brahmans and women were never
put to death; the former were punished for grave offences by
loss of caste and banishment, and the latter by being sold as
slaves. The punishment of death was reserved for such heinous [688]
offences as sacrilege, the wilful murder of a Brahman or a
cow. The following is a summary of the account given by 175
Duarte Barbosa, pp. 116—117, regarding the methods of dealing 564
with criminals and the nature of the punishments inflicted on 685
them in former times:—When any member of a low caste com-
mitted robbery about which a complaint had been made to the
king or the governor, orders were issued for his apprehension, and
if he was caught and he confessed his guilt, he was generally
impaled. His head was severed, and the body being placed
on its back, the arms and legs were fastened with ropes to four
posts, while the multitude to show their contempt spat upon it.
If, however, the malefactor was a Moor, he was beheaded. The

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[1] Letters from Malabar by J. C. Visscher, pages 76-77.

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stolen property went to the ruler of the State. If the stolen pro-
564 perty was discovered after the escape of the thief, it was returned
685 to the owner after a certain number of days, and a fourth part
[643] was appropriated by the State. If, however, a thief refused to
[425] confess his guilt, he was confined for a period of eight days
during which every method of torture known to the keepers of
[695] the prisons was tried to extort his confession. If he continued
in reiterating his innocence, it was left to the accuser to elect
695 whether he should be let off or forced to undergo trial by ordeal.
In the latter case, on an auspicious day, the accused would be
175 allowed to bathe and recite his daily prayers, after which he was
685 conducted to the idol in the temple. Before the idol he swore
564 that he had not committed the theft nor did he know the guilty
person, and plunged his two fingers up to the middle joint into
a caldron of boiling oil. If he was burnt, he was accounted
guilty of the crime; if unhurt, he was liberated. Another form
of proving the guilt or innocence of a prisoner who would not
confess his crime, was to make him thrust his hand into a
mantle in which a sacred and poisonous snake had been wrapped and force him to lift it out. If he was bitten, he was
guilty. A third form was the wading through a tank full of
alligators before a pagoda at Palliport, fifteen miles north of
175 Cochin, and if he survived he was considered innocent."[1] Con-
cerning the procedure against the debtors, a curious custom
686 seems to have prevailed, which is thus described by *Varthema*:—

> " Let us suppose the case that some one has to pay me twenty-five ducats, and the debtor promises me to pay them many times and does not pay them. I, not being willing to wait any longer, nor to give him any indulgence, shall take a green branch in my hand, shall go softly behind the debtor, and with the said branch shall draw a circle on the ground surrounding him; and if I can enclose him in a circle, shall say to him these words three times: 'I command you by the head of the Brahmans and the king that you do not depart hence, until you have paid me and satisfied me as much as I ought to have from thee,' and he will satisfy me or truly he will die without any other guard, and should he quit the said circle, the king will put him to death. "

175 " It has been already said, that the nobles enjoyed ex-
564 emption and privileges, and that they could not be taken and
681 put in irons; but if a noble were to rob or kill any one or a
cow or to sleep with a woman of low caste or of the Brahmans

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[1] **Letters from Malabar by J. C. Visscher, pages 68-69.**

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or if he ate and drank in the house of a low caste-man or spoke 564
ill of the king, and if any one of these were established in his 681
own words, the king would call three or four honorable gentlemen and have him put to death. After he was dead, they laid him on his back, to place the king's warrant on his breast. If he was left dead in the country, the dead was so exposed as a prey to vultures and dogs. If he was put to death in the city, the dead body was allowed to be removed either as a mark of favour, or on payment of fine, by the citizens with the king's permission. If, on the other hand, he commits any other offence, he would be dealt with in the same way as any criminal already described."

Cruel as the administration of justice might appear to be 69
in ancient times, many early writers bear testimony to the fact 181
that private property was as secure in the fourteenth century as it is to-day, and that security and justice were firmly established in the land. Varthema was impressed with the honesty of the inhabitants; and the favourable testimony of the previous writers was confirmed by Pyrard-De-Laval, a Frenchman, who remarked that justice was well administered and awarded
gratuitously. These systems have been completely forgotten [178]
and given place to the institution of regular courts, where justice is administered in accordance with the principles of British jurisprudence.

Feudalism in the Cochin State.

From the earliest times, even perhaps before the Aryan 701
immigration, there appears to have been a complete 634
military organisation among the Sudras 621
of Malabar. The country was divided into *Nâds*, or principalities, and the smallest territorial unit in it was a *Désam* (or village) presided over by a *Désavâzhi* (ruler of a *Désam*). Each of the *Désams* and *Nâds* was designated by the allotted quota of Nayars it was required to put into the field. The names of these divisions, even after the long lapse of time, have not been
forgotten. The authority of the chiefs of these military divisions, [428]
large and small, was hereditary in their respective families and they had appropriate titles of distinction. They were not always in attendance on the Raja's person. If not required on particular State duties or religious services, they were called out for offensive or defensive warfare.

A chief was not considered a *Nâduvâzhi* (ruler of a *Nad*), who had not at least a hundred soldiers attached to him, and one with less than that number was called a Désavázhi.

000 and one with less than that number was called a *Désavázhi*.
651 There were in those days no taxes levied from the people, and
434 the chief from the Rajas down to the *Désavázhi* possessed
[423] demesne lands for their support which were cultivated either
[427] by themselves or leased to *kudiyáns* or tenants ; but the following
were the chief sources of income, based upon feudal rights
and privileges. The rulers levied custom duties upon exports
and imports, taxes upon houses of fishermen, tradesmen and
professional men. Criminal fines went to fill their coffers, and
succession duties were levied upon the estates of deceased persons,
especially those who held offices of State or rights over
land. Outcast women were made a two-fold source of profit.
[439] Lewd adulterous women were made over to the chiefs with
[567] a premium for the trouble of looking after them, and the chiefs
used in turn to sell the women to foreign merchants as slaves
[768] or wives to *Chettis*. The estates of persons who died without
[597] heirs were escheated, nor could an heir be adopted without the
Raja's consent, for which a fee was generally levied. Protection
fees from strangers and merchants were levied under various
names and customary presents were the ruler's dues on occasions
of feast or funeral. Wrecks were his perquisites, and
175 various animals his monopoly. Concerning the former, Marco
651 Polo wrote about the kingdom of Eli, "And you must know
434 that if any ship enters the estuary and anchors when she
648 has been bound for some other port, they seize her and
plunder the cargo. They say that you are bound somewhere else, and it is God that sent you hither to us, so we have a right to all your goods, and think it no sin to act thus. This naughty custom prevails all over the Provinces of India, to wit, that if a ship be driven by a stress of weather into some other port than that to which it is bound, it is sure to be plundered. But if a ship came bound originally to the place, they received it with all honour and gave it protection."[1] The custom of the taking of ships and cargoes lasted down to recent times, until the English factory at Tellicherry entered into agreements with three of the country-powers for the exemption of English vessels from such seizures.

643 Among the animals that became the property of the Raja
422 were cows with three or five dugs, cattle that has killed a man
825 or other animals, cattle with a white spot near the corner of

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[1] Yulles Marco Polo, page 374.

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the eye, buffaloes with white tips to their tails, wild elephants 422
caught in traps and wild hogs that had fallen into wells. 825

Even in social matters, these chieftains had supreme 634
powers. In the settlement of marriages in any part of the
country, the Nayars had to obtain the chieftain's sanction 585
who held sway over the particular locality. The custom is even [182]
now in vogue though in a visibly weakened form. In the [431]
celebration of a *Kettu kalyánam* or *sambandham* in any part
of the country, the parties concerned visited the chieftain and
bought his consent with presents. For without such consent
no settlement and celebration thereafter could be arranged. His [574]
consent had to be procured even for the holding of festivals.

The chieftain's powers were so great that, if a wife living 595
with her husband proved an object of attraction to another, 634
adequate presents to the chieftain would buy him a formal writ,
giving him the rights of a husband over that woman. Thus
even so late as only a generation or two ago, the chieftain's
power was exercised in the encouragement of polyandry.

When a tali-tying ceremony had to be performed for a 588
girl of any decent family in a locality, she was taken to the 634
local chieftain with a nuzzar or *tirumulkázhcha* and other 421
things prepared for the festival that was to follow. In return
the girl was given a golden bracelet which she was authorised
to wear in his presence. No girl who had not received such a
one could wear it.

In certain parts of the State people were afraid to erect 634
buildings of more than one storey, lest they should incur the 342
inexorable wrath of the chieftain; nor were they allowed to tile
thatched houses. Departures from these customs were allowed
only with the consent of the chieftain, embodied in a writ
issued by him. In rural parts even to this day such restrictions [369]
are not totally inoperative. In the State His Highness [182]
the Raja gives his sanction in regard to some social 643
matters even to this day and Nambutiri landlords exercise a 566
similar authority among the tenants occupying their lands.
Certain kinds of conveyances such as palanquins and dholies 634
were reserved only for chieftains while the *Pallichans* were the [493]
only people who were employed to carry them. Various titles[1] [564]
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[1] Vide pages 18-20.

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553 were conferred upon the people. These were, in brief, the
rights and privileges[1] of the feudal chieftains of old.

Village organisation and village life.

621 The question regarding the existence in ancient times of a
village organisation in the Cochin State, as
in Malabar, is somewhat unsettled. Some are
of opinion that the village communities of the east coast
have no counterpart in the west, and that there were no
regular villages; while others state that the organisation of
the country for agrarian, civil, social, and administrative
purposes was the ordinary type closely allied to the Tamil
nationalities, the cradle of its races, languages, and institutions:
and that it rested on the village system in its truest and
simplest form. The earliest social organisation was apparently
based upon the family group into which the various
tribes or castes divided themselves, each with its more or less
well defined territorial limits. The Brahmans were grouped in
grámams and the Nayars in *thards* or *chéris*. The old territorial
[634] torial unit was a *désam* presided over by *Désavázhi* or *Jenmidar*,
and a number of *désams* constituted a *nád* ruled over by
a *Náduvazhi* or local chieftain who was subject to the Raja.
622 The rights and privileges of the *Désavázhi* were: (1) the direction
of the religious ceremonies of the village pagodas, (2) the
management of the village pagoda lands and servants, (3) the
control of marriages and other ceremonies in the village, and
(4) the superintendence of all offences of the *désam* or village.
He had besides the civil direction of the religious and military
affairs of the villages. The same head-man was a *Désavázhi* or
Jenmi according as he exercised all or only the first two functions
634 tions in the village. The *Náduvázhi* was the military chief of
[622] his *nád* who was bound to attend the Raja and to march
wherever he was directed with all the fighting men of his territory
[701] tory under the control of *Désavázhis* of their respective villages.
[451] lages. In time of peace he collected the ordinary and extra
revenue, and was helped by one or two accountants. Thus an
[651] old typical village was one which consisted of the houses of
621 the military class of Nayars and of those of other low castes,
[564] the members of which, like the medieval guilds, were bound
together by the ties of common interests, rendering to one
another reciprocal services for a share of the village produce,
and for the protection which they enjoyed. The village in

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[1] Malabar and Its Folk, pages 108-127.

fact contained all the rudiments of the State. There was the 62
head-man with his assistants whose duties have been already
mentioned. There were also the hereditary village servants [357]
(*cheria jenmakkárs*), the village Panchayets or *kúttams*, and
the *Kavalai* system of police; and the village watchmen (*kávalkkárs*) with their grain fees, and sacred institutions, with their
usual privileges. And finally there were independent Nayar [634]
chieftains with their private properties and usual sources of
income and taxation.

The village life is simple, delightful, and charming, but 62
it is gradually passing away under the influence of western 177
civilization. It is therefore of some ethnographical interest
to preserve an account of it at its period of transition.

The village education may first be taken for treatment. 875
The old village school or pial school masters were called
Ezhuttachans or *Asáns*, some of whom were maintained by
the leading families on small monthly allowances and meals,
while others owned schools and lived upon the income derived
from the pupils thereof. The education of youths com- 872
menced at a very early period, for which an auspicious day, (177)
nay, an auspicious hour, generally the *Vijaya Desami* or
Vidyárambham (beginning of the alphabet) day, the last day
of *Desara* in the month of *Kanni* or *Thulám* (September-November) was chosen, when the local *Asán* or any fairly
educated man was invited to give the boy his first lesson. In
a conspicuous part of the building a bell-metal vessel was
placed. On this was spread a thin layer of rice, and on each
side of the vessel was placed a bag of rice and paddy, while a
lighted lamp was also placed beside it. In front of these
sat the infant scholar three or five years of age. The *Asán*
or the teacher wrote on the boy's tongue with a gold coin
(fanam) the divine invocation *Hari Sree Gana Pata Ye
Namah* (Salutation be to Vishnu, Saraswati and Ganapati).
The initiation was completed by the teacher holding the boy's
ring finger and tracing the letters of the alphabet in the rice in
the vessel. The ceremony would then come to an end with [574]
a feast to the inmates of the house as well as to friends
and relations. After this, he was placed under a teacher who
taught him along with others to write the letters of the alphabet on sand. This would go on for a month or two until the

872 youngster got a mastery of the letters. Then he was taught to read and write short sentences on cadjan leaves (*Ola Ezhuttal*). He was made to commit to memory short verses, and lessons in arithmetic were added to his curriculum. Thus the youngster acquired a fair knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, in about two years, and was thereafter recommended to an advanced course of studies, which consisted of a study of Sanskrit, the perusal of the *Puránas*, and also arithmetic sufficient to enable him to calculate the position of planets and help him in the casting of horoscopes. Girls also were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and singing, and were encouraged in the reading of the *Purânas*. Such in brief was the course of instruction imparted in these small institutions.

872 The schools were flimsy sheds with little or no furniture,
876 while the boys sat on small mats or on the floor, which was
[346] covered with sand for purposes of writing. The teacher had a
raised seat from which he supervised and listened to the loud
[354] recitations of the lessons set on the previous evenings. The boys went to him, one by one, repeated their lesson, and received another written by him on the palm leaf, which was to be learnt during the day. The school hours were generally from seven to ten in the morning and again from two to five in the afternoon. During the latter hours, the budding scholars were instructed in the reading of the Ramayana and other *Puránas*; and before the end of the lessons for the day, the boys were made to repeat with one voice, some mathematical formula. At home, the boys revised their work and recited the names of Gods and short verses as prayers to them. They had no work for about 12 days in the month, besides the usual Hindu holidays.
[875] Twice during the month, when the fortnightly holidays commenced, *i. e.*, on *Dwddesi* (the 12th day after the full or new moon), the teacher was remunerated by each boy with the payment of an anna or two, and even this was sometimes evaded by the opportune absenting of some pupils. He also received presents of cloth with a rupee or two from some of the richer families to which a few of his pupils belonged. Boys were subjected to a rigorous course of discipline; caning was freely resorted to as a mode of correction, and the teacher was often regarded with terror rather than with respect and admiration. Their only books were manuscripts on cadjan leaves; their

only training was the training of the memory, and the learned 872
pedagogue never bestowed a thought on cultivating the thinking 876
powers or the originality of his pupils. But this type of [178]
school and school-master is fast disappearing under the modern
regime of elementary schools.

Next in importance to the school-master is the Kaniyan, 791
an indispensable factor in the affairs and ceremonies of the 554
village.[1]

Then come the artisan classes whose services are neces- 564
sary in the construction of houses, and the making of implements of agriculture. They were paid for their work either in kind or in coin.

The other men of importance in the village economic life
were the physician, the village washerman, and the village barber. The village physician was a man of parts; for, not only [759]
did he tend the sick and the ailing, but also cast out devils [791]
from persons possessed, and with the aid of well prepared
charms guarded them from the effects of the evil eye. The
village washermen were of the Veluthédan and the Mannán
caste. The services of the former were always requisitioned [783]
when people wished to become free from pollution, an act the
omission of which leads to outcasting.

The village barber is another indispensable factor in the [305]
village ceremony and is employed for the shaving before all
ceremonies. His privileges cannot be encroached upon by his
own caste-men from other villages.

The village organisation above described is preserved to a 621
certain extent even now and most probably the Kaniyan's pro- 182
fession will survive all other relics of Hindu institutions, as his
services are considered to be of essential importance in matters [791]
of every day life.

Village pastimes.

The ordinary games pursued by the young men of the 526
village are the foot-ball matches, *Attakalam*,
Kayyámkali, and *Kaikottikkali* (a favourite
circular dance of the women), *Uzhinjál* and others, while cards
and chess are common enough on festive occasions. Cock- [541]
fighting is an interesting pastime among the lower classes. [554]

The most important of the village pastimes are the dra- 536
matic performances, a description of which is given in the
following pages. The drama in Malabar sprang into being in 538

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[1] Vide my account of the Kaniyans, Vol. I, Chap. XI, pages 190-93.

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the early ages, and *Krishnáttam* and *Rámanáttam* are among the earliest productions in the Malayalam literature. The origin of the former is interesting. A pious devotee, Vilvamangalattu Swámiyar, by name, resided in the temple of Guruváyúr in the Chaughat Taluk, which belonged to the Zamorin of Calicut. One of the Zamorins, while on a pilgrimage to the temple, asked the pious Swamiyar to show him the person of the God Krishna. On his wish being gratified, he was so much attracted by the handsome countenance of the divine 'Child God' that the Raja attempted to detain him by catching him by the head. But, alas, he vanished, leaving in the hands of the Raja a single peacock's feather which had adorned the crown on his head. The Raja who was a great scholar determined to write a drama which would contain the life of Krishna—from his incarnation to his departure to heaven—and *Krishnáttam* was the outcome of that resolve. This play, which is seldom 536 acted outside Calicut, takes eight days for its performance beginning as a rule, each night, at 10 p. m. and lasting until 3 a. m.

The cost of a night's performance is 64 fanams (eighteen rupees, four annas, and seven pies). Once it is said that when the actors went to Tripunathura, the residence of His Highness the Raja of Cochin, who had a night's performance in his palace, *Kamsavadham* (death of Kamsa, an *Asura* king, who was the maternal uncle of Krishna) was the play selected for the night; and to try the strength of the actor Krishna, a tusker who was brought to the stage was caught hold of by the tusks and killed. The play was never thereafter sent either to Cochin or Travancore.

The other play which is equal in importance to the one just described is the *Ramanáttam*, and was composed by the *Kottarakkara Tampuran*, a distant relative of the then ruling sovereign of Travancore. Once this prince asked the Zamorin of Calicut to send his actors for a few nights' performance in his own palace; but his request was refused on the plea that the prince as well as the southerners generally, were not able to appreciate so important and erudite a drama. This led to the composition of a play by the prince himself.

Plays, as a general rule, are not very popular at present, perhaps with the exception of the one kind which is now being played. There are also other kinds of plays, which are called 538 *Attakkathas* (plays in which the incidents are represented by dancing and gestures) in Travancore, and *Kathakalis* in Malabar. Many additions to these were made by different scholars in different times, and they now number about fifty-six, most of which are now being acted. Many or all of them possess a [873] high order of literary excellence, and are, year after year, prescribed as vernacular text books for University Examinations.

Personal adornment of the actors.—In the beginning the actors had no regular dress as at present, nor was there any curtain dividing the audience from the stage. The only the- [532] atrical property known in those days were figures clumsily drawn upon the bark of the areca palm and attached to the [534] bodies of the actors, while the orchestra consisted only of the *maddalam*, a kind of drum. But innovations were soon intro- [176] duced, and the first of these were those introduced by the Tirúr or Bettattunad Raja.

It may not be out of place here to give a short sketch of a day's performance as it is to-day. A travelling company, [534] which usually consists of twelve actors, four singers, and four musicians who form an "orchestra with drums (*maddalam* and *chenda*), gongs (*chengalam*) and cymbals (*elathalam*)", is invited and lodged in a house near which they are to give the performance. In the morning they are given gingelly oil for [262] an oil-bath, and are then served with rice, *kanji*, and *pappadam*. This forms their breakfast. After it, they retire to sleep till about four o'clock in the afternoon. At five o'clock [203] they are treated to a sumptuous dinner, and half an hour later begins, by beat of drums and other musical instruments of the company, a formal announcement to the villagers in the neighbourhood that a play is to be performed that night.

The stage is nothing more than a crude wooden structure slightly raised from the ground. The drop curtain consists usually of pieces of cloth sewn together and the figure of a god or an animal drawn thereon. The auditorium consists of [345] mats strewn on the floor for the audience to sit on, while two [354] bell-metal lamps, containing cocoanut-oil and wicks of rolled [534] cotton cloth, are the only means of lighting the theatre. Sometimes to add to the solemnity of the occasion conch shells are

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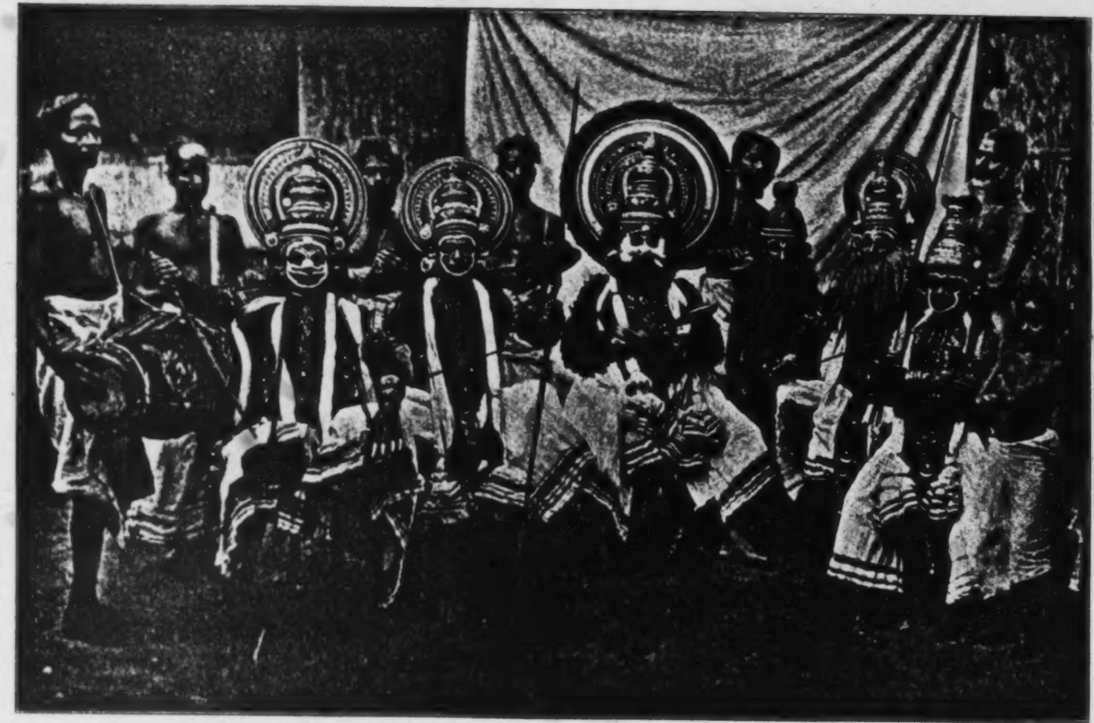
[facing p. 65]



CHARACTERS OF MALABAR DRAMA (KATHA KALI).

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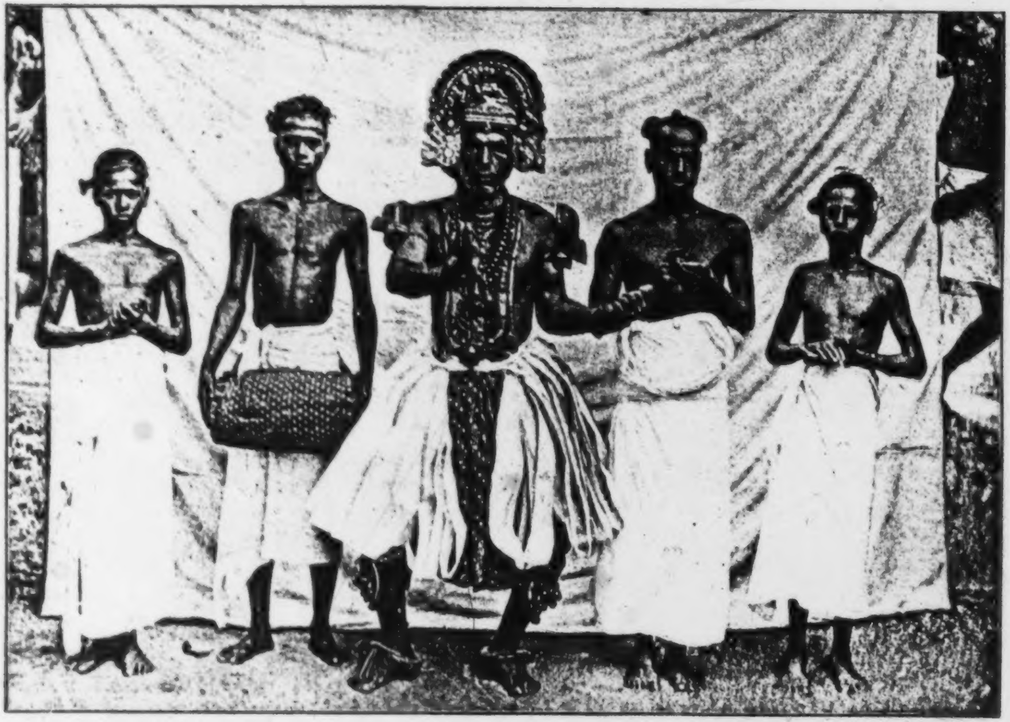
536 intermittently blown. Such are the crude theatrical properties which the actor has to face.

[533] [782] At about eight o'clock begins the ***Thódayam purapád***, consisting of songs which are meant to initiate the audience into the mysteries of the plot. But this takes place behind the drop curtain, which has not yet been drawn up. Next comes the ***Vandanaslókam***—a song in propitiation of some particular god—and then begins the play. The actors perform only by means of dumb-show, and the music is provided by the singers who, though invisible, are close at hand. All changes of thought, feelings, and emotions are conveyed by means of gestures of which there are said to be sixty-four different kinds, and in the commingling of these, lies the skill of the actor. Inhuman and unchivalrous acts, such as chopping off the noses and breasts of women, are usually enacted behind the scenes; though, in certain cases, these are made realistic by the characters to be victimised wearing false noses and breasts. [435] It is not until the dawn of day that the play ends. The cost of a night's performance is only about fifteen rupees, while the cost of all the stock in trade is often less than 400 rupees.

536 176 A special innovation in this direction was made by the Valia Kovil Tampurán of Travancore and others who translated a few of the most important Sanskrit dramas. They introduced a real improvement in the construction of the stage and scenery, as also in the mode of dress, the style of music, and the method of acting, all of which were changes for the better. Dramatic companies were organised in many places where the plays were acted. They were at first very popular, but most of them disappeared as they did not play; but yet poets and versifiers still continue their work of producing plays for the stage.

536 ***Mohiniyáttam.***—This is an institution, very much like the nautch of the East Coast. A leader (***Nettuvan***) obtains the service of two or three young girls of low birth and trains them for the performance. He takes the girls from house to house, gets a paltry allowance for each day's performance, and thus makes a living. The performance is usually acted at night, when the girls, dressed in the gaudy attire, are led by [654] the ***Nettuvan*** in an amorous dance. This is an abominable institution, and the women who are thus rented out are looked



OTTAMTHULLAI.

[facing p.66]

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upon with contempt. It must be noted that they live sepa- 536
rately, having little or nothing in common with the other class- [554]
es, and that the institution is dying a silent and natural death. [182]

Songs.— There have been very many songs current among 533
the Nayars even from a very remote period; and they are [782]
chiefly composed and sung in honour of deities, and are mostly prayers addressed to them. A translation of these is not here attempted, for they lose much of their beauty, but the following, however, are the most important of them :—

Bhadrakali Páttu :—These are songs which are sung in honour of Káli, and are supposed to have been composed by the Sudras of Palghat long before the Malayalam era. Certain dramatic songs also appear to have been composed about the same time, and refer to the deities on the hills as well as to the kings of the period. They are sung in towns and villages, between Anamala and Trichur in the east, and the
Walayar forests on the other side. The ancient name of these [173]
localities was Cheranad, and it was the first place to be occu-
pied by people, when Kerala was a marshy tract. As evidence [172]
of this, remains of houses are still to be seen at the foot of the hills. In a place of such historic importance were composed and sung these songs, which are so full of the ideas of the Vedanta and Yoga philosophies, and which give a clue to the nature of the people who once lived there. There is also another variety of songs referring to *Dárikavadham*, (murder of the demon Dárikan), and they are sung by a class of men called the *Kurippans*. There are also other old songs such as the *Sásta páttu* (songs in honour of Sásta).

Ganapati páttu (songs in honour of Ganapati) and serpent songs :—Among the old songs, those referring to agriculture, and composed during the third century of the Malayalam era, occupy a prominent place, and the agriculturists of the northern parts of the State even to-day follow the precepts laid down in these songs. But excepting, the song commemorating the deeds of *Meppayil Kunji Othenan*, the Robinhood of North Malabar, there are no songs which sing of the deeds of brave men.

The chief festivals.—(1). *Onam* :—This is an important 796
national festival, which falls in the second half of August 773
or the first half of September, and is celebrated in commemoration of Mahábali, an *Asura* king, whose reign is believed

796 773 to have been a period of uninterrupted peace, plenty, and prosperity. Growing jealous and apprehensive of the glory and greatness of this great king, the Dévás entreated Vishnu to quell the pride of this earthly potentate; and Vishnu, thereupon, appeared as *Vámana* (dwarf, his fifth incarnation) to request him for a plot of three feet of earth. The prayer was readily granted by the sovereign, who found to his cost that he could not satisfy him; for, large as his kingdom was, it was found to be very small when measured by the *Vámana*, who eventually placed his foot upon his head and pushed him down to the regions below. Grieved at the loss of their dear king, his subjects prayed to Vishnu to allow him to re-visit the earth once a year, and this is popularly believed to happen on the *Tiruvónam* day.

796 The festival is celebrated in honour of his re-appearance, and with it the return of happy days. It is practically confined to four days which are observed as holidays throughout Kérala, and people of all ranks from the prince to the peasant acknowledge them as such. Ten days before *Tiruvónam*, signs of the approaching festival are visible in every Nayar house, which, by its neatness and cleanliness all around, puts on a gay appearance. A portion of the front yard of the house, opposite to the store-room, is selected, and there a temporary stall of mud is put up for the royal visitor to sit upon. Flowers are strewn over it and on the night previous to the auspicious [532] day, pyramid-shaped images of the king made of wood or clay, called *Trikkákarappan*, are placed upon it amid the deafening cheers of the members of the family who assemble at the gate to greet him. *Pujas* are daily made both in the morning and evening before the inmates take their meals, and this con- [431] tinues up to the closing of the festival. In respectable families the festival opens with the presents of cloths by the *káranavans* to the junior members of the family as well as to other close relations, servants, and others. This is also the occasion when tenants make gifts of curry-stuffs, chiefly banana, for the celebration of the festival, and they are often rewarded with 796 cloths and also fed. A feast is held on a large scale, all the 574 four days, while the essential element in it is the consumption of [262] bananas or *nendranpazham*. The fruits are cut into two or three pieces, boiled in water, and are eaten alone or with *pappadam*.

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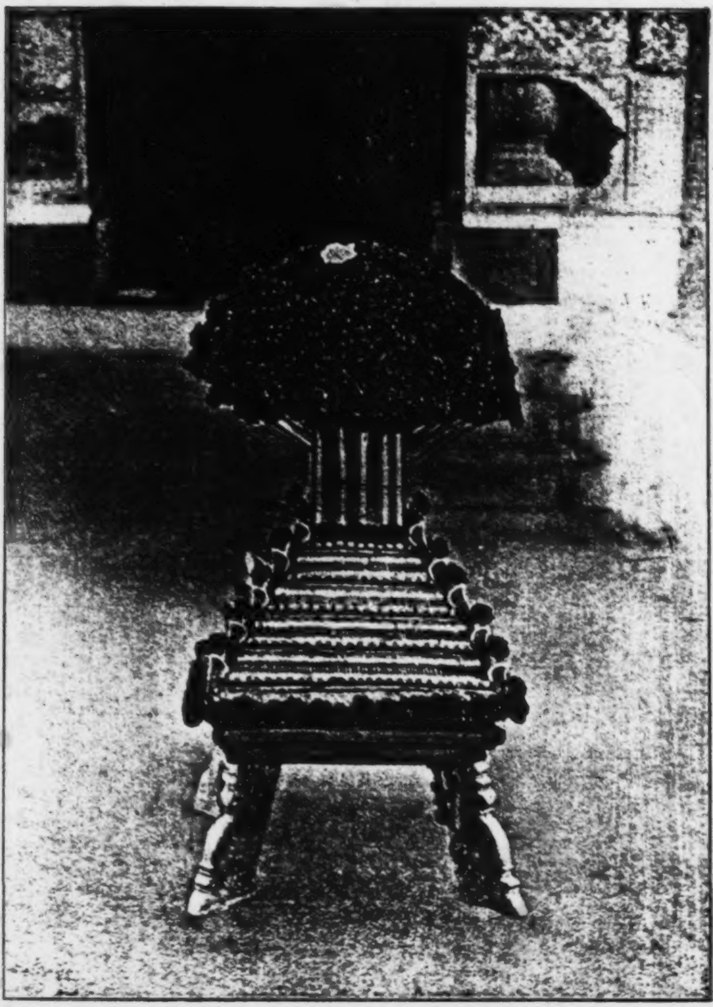

MAHADEVAR.

[facing p. 68]

Another peculiar feature of this festival is that all the male 796
and female members of the family sit apart at meals. By [264]
mid-day the principal meal is over, and each goes dressed in
fine attire now, seeks the amusement most congenial to him.
Field-games, such as hand-ball or rounders, personal combats, [526]
games of chess, dice, and cards, dancing by females, and music [535]
parties constitute the leading forms of enjoyment from morning [524]
until evening.

Hand-ball matches.—A small stick is planted at a fixed 796
spot, and the young men divide themselves into two rival parties. 526
A member of one party stands at the post, while the others stand away from it. The ball which is usually made of coir rope is thrown by a member of one of the opposing party, and on its being struck by the man at the post, the others attempt to catch it before the bounce or stop its onward career. If the ball hits the post, or if any member of the opposing party catches the ball before it has touched the ground, that player's turn is over. Another man takes his place and so on, until all the members of one party have had their turn. Then the rival section begins to play exactly in the same manner and under the same rules as before.

Combats are of two kinds, namely, those between single adversaries, and those held in batches. In the first, the people of one locality divide themselves into two parties. When the match is opened, the leader of one group brings forward a trained pugilist who goes into the intervening open space, between the two groups, challenging any one from the opposite camp to meet him in fair fight. A little while after, some one from the other party takes up the challenge, and then the combat begins. The victor is rewarded with presents of cloths and money by the rich and generous members of the community assembled there. The same process is continued till the close of the day. In Palghat the *Onam* games are of a rougher character; the tenants of certain landlords turn out each under their own leader and engage in sham fights in which there is much rough play.

There is also another amusement, in which a peculiar 796
bow, formed of a strong and slightly elastic wood with a split 534
bamboo finely polished for the string, is used. By means of a

796 stick, it is possible to produce a kind of musical tone, for
[534] which a party is organised to play on it. This entertainment
is much admired, and interests the people very much.

(2). *Tiruvátira* :—This is another important national festival,
which falls on the *Tiruvátira* day in Dhanu (December-
[776] January). This concerns the Nayar women, and is said to
commemorate the death of *Káma Déva*, the cupid of Indian
mythology, by the burning fire of the third eye of the God
[533] Siva. Before day-break the festive day, the young women
of the Nayar families hasten to the nearest tank or river for
bathing, and during the bath, they amuse themselves with
Tiruvátira páttu, songs accompanied by regular splashing
of water, supposed to be symbolical of beating of the
breast, on account of their grief for Kama's death. At daybreak,
they return home, and, gaily dressed and adorned, they
[526] go to the nearest temple for worship. After a slight breakfast,
they proceed to enjoy the *Ushinjal* (a swinging apparatus
made of bamboo and attached to a horizontal branch of a tree).
[264] Immense pleasure is taken in this game. The family dinner
is at noon, when bananas, sliced and fried in cocoanut-oil,
[262] seasoned with salt, are freely distributed among the friends and
[431] relatives assembled there. Ripe plantains, and the sweet preparation
[263] of arrow-root flour purified and seasoned with jaggery
or sugar and cocoanuts, also form one of the chief items of the
feast.

[804] (3). *Vishu* :—Next in importance to the two great national
festivals just described, comes *Vishu* on the first of Medam
[777] (March-April), which is the astronomical new year's day; and
a man's prosperity during the year is believed to depend on his seeing some good and lucky thing on the *Vishu* morning. It is the custom to prepare on the night previous, what is known as *Kani*. A bell-metal vessel (*uruli*) is taken, and in it are arranged a *grantha* or cadjan manuscript, a gold ornament, a new washed cloth, some flowers of the *konna* tree (Cassia fistula), some coins in a silver cup, a cocoanut cut into two, a cucumber, some mangoes, and a jack-fruit. On either side of the vessel, are also placed two lamps burning, while there is a plank of wood or some other seat placed in front of it. These are placed in the chief room inside the house, and in the morning, the members of the family, one by one, are taken to the

Kani with their eyes shut, and, when they are near it, are 796
directed to open them and look at it. It is taken from house
to house for the benefit of the poor. The *káranavan* of the [613]
family gives small presents of money to the children, servants,
and tenants. It is also the time honoured custom of the State [431]
that on this day the chief officials shall pay their respects to His
Highness the Raja at his residence at Tripunattura, and receive
presents of varying amounts. In former times, it was customary for all the subjects of the ruling princes to pay their
respects to their royal masters with some new year's gifts.
This custom has disappeared, and in its place small presents [431]
are made by tenants and dependents to their landlords which [178]
generally consist of cocoanut, plantains, and other curry-stuffs
—intended probably as a contribution to the celebration. The [574]
day is marked by a grand feast for the members of the household as well as for the tenants and other dependents. To the [431]
Pulayans (the family workmen) are given paddy or rice, oil,
etc., on the previous day to enable them to have their own
celebrations.

(4). The *Dasara* or *Ayutha Puja*, called also as *Saraswati*
Puja, falls in Kanni (September-October) at the autumnal
equinox. It is a festival observed in honour of the Goddess [776]
Saraswati, and every man worships on the last day the implements of his craft and keeps the day a holiday. It is a nine
day's festival and is called *Navaratri*.

(5). *Sivaratri*, which falls in Kumbham (February-March), is also an important festival which is observed in common with the members of other higher castes.

Important local festivals.—Of the festivals connected with 796
the temples of the State, the most important is the cock-festi- 184
val (Bharani) at the Cranganore Kali temple, an account of
which is given in my notes on the Valans.[1]

In addition to the *Utsavams* (festivals) held once a year in all important temples in the State, there are other popular festivals such as the *Pûrams* at Arattupuzha and Trichur, and the *Kongapada* at Chittur. A short account of the latter is given in the following pages.

The Kongapada festival of Chittur.

The name signifies 'war with Kongan'. The festival falls on the Monday succeeding the Wednesday which immediately follows the new moon in the month of Kumbham (February-March) every year. It will

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[1] Vide Vol. I, page [illegible].

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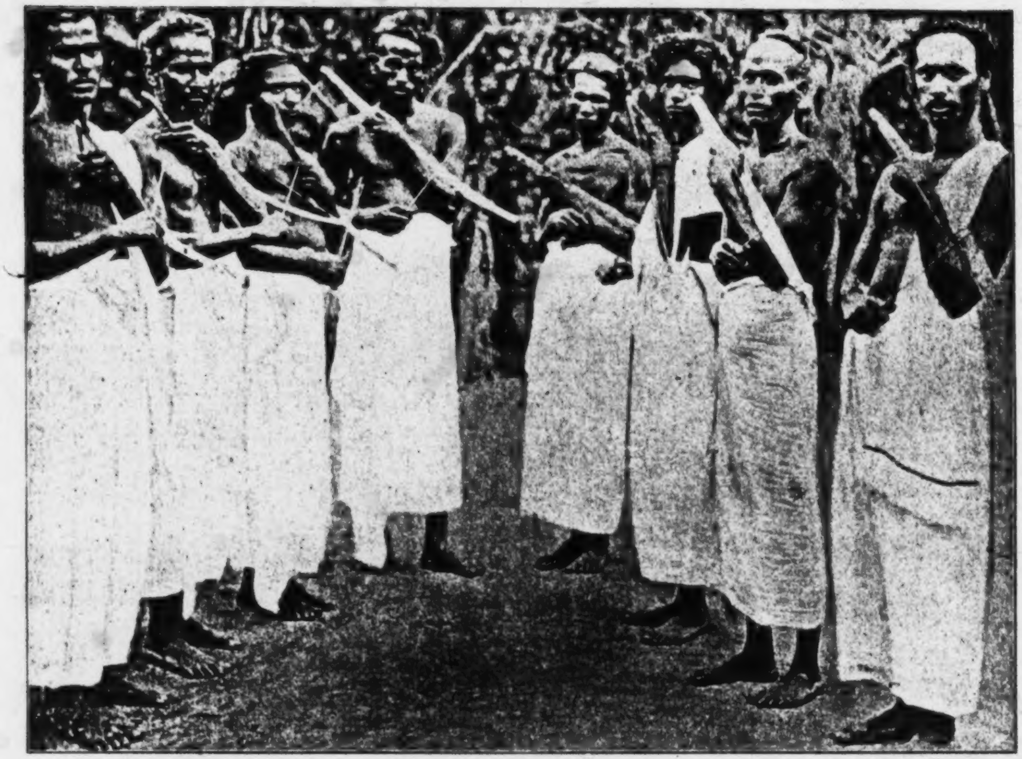

A PARTY OF NAYARS: TIMING ON BOWSTRINGS DURING ONAM FESTIVAL.

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184 come off, therefore, either in the latter part of Kumbham or in
the former part of the next following month of Meenam
according as the new moon in Kumbham occurs earlier or
796 later. The festival is said to be celebrated in commemora-
184 tion of the victory obtained by the local deity, Bhadrakali,
773 widely known by the local designation of Chittur Bhagavati,
in a battle fought with the Kongans, the people of what
776 was known in ancient days as the 'Kongu Desam' compris-
ing the localities included in the present British District
of Coimbatore, and lying to the north and east of the
Chittur Taluk. The final engagement was fought in the
eastern out-skirts of the present town of Chittur, and in it
the Kongu chief called in the old songs by the simple
name of 'Kongan' was slain by the Goddess with her own
hand. The place of engagement is now marked by a small
extent of rocky surface, on which is cut the figure of the Bhaga-
vati's sword with which Kongan's head was cut off. The rock
also shows two holes nearly a foot in depth, and six inches
in diameter. These holes are pointed out by old people
as having been made by the hoofs of the fore-legs of the
Kongan's mount, which is described as a magnificent buff-
bull, when the animal jumped on to the rock in the excitement
caused by the fall of its master from its back slain by the God-
dess. The buff-bull was also slain on the spot. The whole of
the Kongu army was completely routed, and all stampeded to
their country in utter confusion. In the course of the battle a
few men on the side of the Bhagavati were also killed or
wounded, among whom were four important persons belonging
to four ancient families in Chittur, who appear to have been
the leaders of the local militia. The dead bodies of these four
and the wounded were taken from the field of battle and carried
to the town and handed over to the respective families, the
procession being led by the Goddess, who afterwards command-
ed the people to celebrate the victory every year, and after
173 entering the temple disappeared into her image within. Tra-
796 dition speaks thus of the origin of the war. The wealth of the
184 'Kongu Desom' chiefly consisted of chillies, turmeric, corian-
[439] der, cumin seed, mustard, areca nut, etc. These commodities
used to be exported for sale, in return for paddy, from Kongu
[492] Desom to Chittur, Palghat, and other places in large quantities

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laden on the backs of mules, asses, bullocks and buffaloes. 796
When once a large caravansary of Kongu laden with such commodities was passing through Chittur, the people of the four *desams* of Chittur, *viz.*, Chittur, Nallepilli, Tattamangalam, and Pattancheri, robbed the Kongans of all their animals and goods. The chief of Kongu, on receiving the information, naturally felt indignant, and despatched an ultimatum to the *Pramánakkars* of Chittur, demanding the surrender of the animals and the articles, failing which, it was said, he would overrun the four *desams*, destroy the houses, and kill all people even including women and children. On receiving the ultimatum, the people went to the temple of the Goddess, and there read the document before the image of the Goddess. It was so read by a member of the Chittedath house, in whose custody, it is said, the original document, written in a copper plate, is still preserved. The reading of the ultimatum, transcribed in a piece of cadjan, before the Bhagavati, is one of the essential functions performed on the night of the Kongapada festival every year, and it is always done by a member of the Chittedath family, who dresses himself up in the fashion of a Kongan and acts the part of the Kongu chief. When the document was read and the people prayed to their Goddess in one voice for protection, the Goddess commanded from within the temple that her 'children' need not fear and that when the Kongan took steps to enforce his ultimatum, she would protect them. On receiving no reply to the ultimatum, the Kongan mobilized his men and crossed the Walayar river, the northern boundary of the Chittur Taluk. The information about the crossing of the boundary was first carried to the Chitturians by the Izhuvans of the vicinity, who were up the palmyra trees early in the morning for the purpose of tapping for toddy, and they in a body climbed down the trees, and without removing their breast protecting leather straps, tapping knives, mallets and ladders, ran to the four *desams* all in excitement. In view of the above fact, the advance portion of the day procession of the Kongapada festival is even to this day made up of a number of persons, mostly of the Chetti caste, belonging to the four *desams*, dressed up in the full toddy-tapping kit of the Izhuvans. They do so every year in pursuance of religious vows made by them for the attainment of particular

184 [439] [492] [776] [314] [273] [564] [782]

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796 objects, such as recovery from illness, success in litigation,
184 birth of children, etc.

[782] When the information of the crossing of the Walayar by the chief of Kongu was communicated to the people of the four *desams* by the Izhuvans, they repaired to the temple in excitement and consternation, when Lo! the temple gates opened of themselves and a beautiful female form dressed in full battle armour, brandishing a shining sword and shedding a resplendent divine light, suddenly emerged out of the image within and marched off direct to meet the advancing army of the Kongan, followed by all the brave men among the
796 people. The battle was fought with the result already mentioned. This battle is enacted on the night of the Konga-
184 pada festival as one of its essential functions, accompanied by the beating of numerous Pariah drums, blowing of horns, racing of horses, torch-light processions, besides, of course, the usual mischief-making among the youngsters, but the elders generally control them and stop excesses. In the course of the sham fight, some act as the wounded, some even as the dead and fall down on the field of action. These dead and wounded are immediately taken up and carried by the youngsters to their supposed respective houses in the town accompanied with torch-lights, beating of drums, beating of breasts, and crying and weeping. No outsider is allowed to take part in this sacred function. If an outsider, being possessed with any sudden fit of enthusiasm, attempts to take part in this function, 'woe be to him.' This battle function takes place at about 10 o'clock in the night and lasts for two or three hours. At the end of it, the night procession of the festival begins from the battle-field and moves through the Nayar quarters to the temple, where it reaches just before day-break, when there is a display of fireworks. After day-break, the chief of the place or *Nâduvâzhi* represented by the Chambath house, accompanied by the people, go to the Goddess' temple to offer prayers of love and gratitude to the Bhagavati. The festival is wound up by a performance on the following night called '*Devendra pallu*' in which all the "one hundred Nayars"[1] of Chittur are

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[1] The Nayar community of Chittur is collectively called by the name of "Chittur Nooru Nayar." It shows that the original village organisation of Chittur consisted of one hundred Nayar houses or families. Although there is a considerable increase in the number of Nayar houses at present, the appellation 'Nooru Nayar' is still used.

supposed to take part under the supervision and guidance of 796 the Sríkandath Panikkar, whose family is the military instructor 184 and leader of the people of Chittur. The Panikkar's duty is to train the youths of the 100 houses in the military arts. The performance referred to is, more or less, an exhibition [431] of the bodily prowess of the youths trained by the Panikkar, and at the end of it he receives presents from the *Náduvázhi* and one hundred fanoms—one fanom for each house—from his pupils. The amount of one hundred fanoms is still paid to him every year, and is defrayed out of the collection made for the Kongapada festival for which the Panikkar's family is exempted from the payment of all subscriptions. The training of the youths of the place is begun a few weeks before the Kongapada festival in the *kalari* (military gymnasium) of the Sríkandath Panikkar, and the Panikkar takes a prominent part in all the functions connected with the festival from beginning to end.

The "Pana" festival of Chittur.

Once in a few years and commencing on an auspicious [777] day after *Vishu*, this ceremony is performed on a grand scale, in which the Nayars of the town (one male member from almost every house) organised themselves into parties, one party for singing songs in praise of the Goddess Bhagavati, another for dancing before her, and the third for playing on musical instruments. These men [782] have, during this period, to bathe early in the morning, cook their own food and remain under a vow to be ever in devotion to the deity. Preliminary to the celebration of the actual festival, which sometimes run for a number of days, the men are given 41 days' training in the several courses of dancing in the Porayattu family house, one of the four *Pramánakkars* (leading members) of the place, and the final performance takes place in the Pokkumarath house.

In the court-yard of the latter house a large pandal supported on 64 posts, is put, up and in its middle is drawn a floral diagram (*padmam*) over which a lighted brass lamp, and in front of it a stool, are placed with a metal pot of water surmounted by a full pod of cocoanut flowers and a washed cloth arranged in the form of a beautiful crown. The Goddess, who [782] is supposed to be located therein by means of holy *mantrams*, is propitiated every night between 9 and 12 P. M., with offerings and *pujas*, to the accompaniment of drumming, singing,

796
184 and dancing. This nightly routine of *pujas*, offerings, dancing,
[782] etc., is thus continued for the prescribed number of days.

On the morning following the last day, the votaries purify
[535] themselves by a bath and fetch branches of *pala* trees, and a
[776] dancing procession is organised, which wends its way through
the Nayar streets, accompanied by the Goddess[1] manifest-
ed through her *Velichapad*, to the temple of the Goddess, and
from there disperse to their respective houses before evening
after singing songs of praise and thanks-giving in honour of
the Goddess. A pit, 15 feet long, 5 feet broad and 3 feet deep,
is then made and filled with ten to fifteen cart-loads of fuel
which is burned and reduced to glowing red hot charcoal.
[787] Here also is performed a *pūja*. At about 4 A. M., the *Velicha-*
pad through whom the Goddess manifests herself, the priests,
[789] the votaries, and lastly the caste-men, all walk over the fire
several times.

[782] The day dawns and the senior member of the Porayattu
family sitting on the stool consecrated to Bhagavati, and
covering his head with the silk cloth of the deity, propitiates
[753] her with offerings of fruits, cocoanuts, and fowls. The whole
ceremony is thus brought to an end. The object of this pro-
[789] pitiation is to protect people from the attacks of cholera,
small-pox, and other epidemics.

Agricultural ceremonies.

241 Before closing this part of the subject, it may be noted that
the agricultural year begins with the *Vishu* (first
of Medam, about the middle of April) at which
[787] the hot weather is supposed to terminate. In families where
the members pursue agriculture as a profession, they send for
the local *Kaniyan* (astrologer), who estimates by astronomical
calculations the agricultural prospects and the probable quan-
[824] tity of rain during the ensuing year. He is also asked to
choose an auspicious day for ploughing, and on that day the
master of the house goes to the seed-store with his Pulayan
slaves and takes out a small quantity of each variety of seed,
which he puts in a cup made of the leaves of the *kanniram*
(nux vomica); he then places the cups in a basket near a lamp
in the yard and places a small heap of rice around or near it.
A new ploughshare fastened to a plough, and a pair of oxen
are also brought, and these are painted with rice water. They
are then taken in procession to the field, on reaching which the

[1] [i.e., The Goddess Bhagavati -- Analyst]

Pulayan head-man raises a mound of earth on which are thrown 241
a little manure and a handful of seed. He then yokes the
cattle to the plough and turns a square plot of ground, taking
care to have furrows made in it, and the plough dropped on
the right. Ganapati is then propitiated with offerings, and [782]
the master throws the seed in the furrow, when the Pulaya [776]
head-man invokes the blessings of the gods and the deceased
ancestors on the seeds that have been sown broadcast,
on the cattle that are let loose, and also on the members
of the family, and prays them for a good crop, much sunshine,
and a good harvest. A cocoanut is then cut on the ploughshare,
and if the hind portion is larger than the front one, it
predicts an excellent harvest. If the nut is cut into two equal [787]
portions, the harvest will be moderate; if the cut passes through
the eyes of the nut or if no water is left in the cut portions,
misfortune is foreboded. The portions of the cocoanut are then
picked up with the milk inside them and a leaf of the *tulsi*
plant (Ocymum sanctum) is dropped into each; if the leaf
turns to the right, a prosperous harvest is assured; if to the
left, the contrary. The ceremonial concludes with loud shouts
and invocations to the gods of husbandry; and the unused
seeds are distributed among the workmen.

Nira:—The bringing in of the first fruits (*Nira*) is celebrated [356]
at the end of Karkadagam (August), previous to which [824]
the doors and windows of the houses are cleansed with the leaves
of a tree called *paragam* (Ficus hispida) and decorated with
rice flour, while the walls are white-washed, and the yard
smeared with cow-dung. On the gates of the houses are [824]
placed various kinds of flowers together with their leaves and
branches, *viz*:—*athi* (Ficus racemosa), *ithi* (Ficus venosa),
arayil (Ficus religiosa), *peral* (Ficus Indica), *illi* (young
bamboo leaves), *nelli* (Phyllanthus Emblica), *jack* (artocarpus
integrifolia), and *mango* (manganefera indica). On the morning [793]
of the ceremonial day, the priest of the temple comes out [534]
preceded by a Marar blowing a conch-shell, when a bunch of
the ears of paddy already placed by the Pulayans outside the
outer wall of the temple is taken by him to the temple with the
same Marar blowing the conch. Every house-holder then [783]
sends out to the fields a man duly purified by a bath and
smeared with ashes to gather some rice. As he brings it to

241 the gate of the houses, he is met by a woman with a lighted
lamp and some leaves on which is placed the rice. This is
carried into the yard in procession, while those assembled cry
out, 'Fill, fill, increase, fill the house, fill the basket, fill the
stomach of the children'. Three times is it carried on a plantain
leaf placed on a wooden plank while the lighted lamp is
[782] placed on the right. Ganapati is then propitiated with offerings,
and stalks of paddy with ears of grain in them are stuck
[776] with cow-dung to the various parts of the house, to the agricultural
implements, and even to trees. A sumptuous breakfast
brings the ceremony to a close.

Puthari :—The next ceremony is the formal cooking and
eating of the new rice (*Puthari*). It sometimes takes place on
the *Nira* day, but generally it is an independent festival. An
[777] auspicious day is chosen as soon as the first crop is harvested
and threshed—a day which must be before the *Onam*. The
[263] rice is cooked and eaten with a special curry made of *tagara*
(Cassia tora) peas, the fruit of *puthari chunda* (Swertia
Cherata), brinjals (Solanum Melongena) and green pumpkin.

Ucharal :—At the end of Makaram (January-February),
when the second crop has been harvested, the year's agricultural
operations are supposed to be over, and Mother Earth, *Bhûmi
Dévi*, is considered to rest during the hot weather until the
first shower begins. At the beginning of this period the Malayali
776 observes a festival in honour of the Goddess' menstruation,
which, like the *Roman Februria*, is supposed to take place at
this time. On the last three days during this festival, all granaries
are closed, paddy is not sold, and no implement of
agriculture is touched, while even the rice to be eaten during
these three days is pounded before-hand. On the first day
before sunset the granaries are closed, some thorns and shrubs
of broom are fixed to the door and cow-dung and ashes are
spread in front of it. The next two days are holidays for all;
the house must not be swept, nor the floors smeared with cow-dung,
and the garden even may not be swept or watered. On
the fourth day the granaries are opened, and a basketful of
leaves is taken to the field and burnt with a little manure
perhaps to indicate that the cultivator remains in possession.

Ucharal is the date on which all agricultural leases should 241
expire, and demand for surrender of property should not be 425
made at any other time, but the courts, by a liberal interpreta- [692]
tion, have extended the term up to the day of *Vishu*. Special [184]
Ucharal festivals are held at Cherpulasseri in the Walluvanad Taluk and near Shoranur, at which straw models of cattle are taken in procession to the temples of Bhagavati.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS

(Continued).

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Religion.

The high caste Nayars profess Hinduism and follow most of the religious practices of the Brahmans whose influence in matters religious as well as social is supreme all over the State. They worship the superior deities of the Hindu pantheon (Siva, Vishnu, and their consorts, as also Ganapati) in *ambalams* or *kshetrams* (temples) of which there are in the State many that have long been in existence. Everywhere in the State, the caste-men and women with their children may be seen going to worship the deities in their local temples both morning and evening after their baths in the [264] public tanks. It is only after this worship that they take their meals, and seldom do they depart from this rule. They also adore the minor deities, namely, Subramanian, Ayyappan, Sástha or Vettakkorumakan, Bhagavati, as well as Kali, the goddess of small-pox, and malignant demons, such as, Kuttichátttan, Mundian, Gulikan, Gantákaranan. But these deities [346] or demons are located in *kavus*, mere unpretentious structures with the characteristic tiled roofs and ornamental gables. [532] These deities are represented by carved or uncarved pieces of stone placed on elevated seats beneath the *ál* (Ficus religiosa), the *pala* (Echites scholaris), or the *kánniram* (strychnos), and the priest is usually a non-Vedic Namburi, an Elayad, a Músad, [782] or one of the Sudra castes. The deities such as Subramanian and others above mentioned, are the sons of Siva, and require no animal sacrifices, but the host of demons require to be propitiated with offerings of goats, or fowls, while their wishes are often interpreted by oracles, who are known as *velichapads*.

The Cochin State, as well as Malabar and Travancore, is the land of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, and as well as

belief in animism, and all these are largely mixed up with the 564
religion of the Nayars. Animism refers to the belief that man 771
passes through life surrounded by a ghastly company of 776
powers, elements, and tendencies, impersonal in character, mere
shapeless phantoms of which no image can be made and no
idea can be formed. Most of these have departments or spheres
of influence of their own—one presides over cholera, another over
small-pox, yet another over cattle disease, some dwell in rocks,
others haunt trees, and others again haunt rivers, whirlpools
and waterfalls. All of them require to be diligently propitiated [782]
by reason of the ills and calamities which they bring about,
and the essence of these practices is magic.

Evidence of a wide-spread belief in the worship of ancestors 769
is to be seen in the kistavens (*thoppi kallús*)—the rock
caves containing the sepulchral urns found in the jungles and
other parts of the State—in the ceremonies performed and the
offerings made for the spirits of the dead. They are worshipped
even now in special *kávús*, sometimes even in small
out-houses or special rooms in the house on new moon days
or *Sankrántis*, and there are also periodical commemorations
on the anniversaries of the ancestor's death. Dead ancestors [532]
are also represented by stones or small images of gold or silver
kept in the middle room of the Nayar houses, and offerings of
food and drink are made to them on new moon and *Sankránti*
nights. Animistic again is the worship of Káli or Bhagavati 771
who presides over small-pox, cholera, and the thousand maladies 776
that flesh is heir to, the worship of animals and plants [789]
and lastly the belief in exorcism and witchcraft in which [754]
Brahmans also share.

Serpent worship.

Serpent shrines (*Nágattán kávús* or *Nagakóttas*) are to be 771
found in the compounds of every Nayar house 778
in the Cochin State, and their worship occupies
a prominent place in the religious life of the Nayars and 825
other castes. The following mythical origin is ascribed to the
adoration of serpents in the Keralólpathi.

The first Aryan colonists settled by Parasurama found Kerala 773
absolutely uninhabitable, and finding it impossible to improve 778
their condition, returned to their old country. After their 825
departure, the Nágas (or serpent gods) of the lower world or [776]
Páthála took possession of the partly reclaimed land and settled

773 778 thereon. The early colonists, on a second venture, finding 825 the land occupied, commenced a war against the Nágas, but 776 Parasurama acting as arbitrator, decided in favour of the early colonists, and ordered that they should set apart a corner of every compound as an abode of the serpent gods. He further ordained that these allotted places were to remain virgin-ground, untouched by the blade of the knife or the prong of the fork, while the under-wood and the creepers were to be allowed to grow in wild profusion, and to such the name 778 *kávu* (grove) was given. In it are generally planted several 771 stone idols of serpents placed on a stone-basement called *chitrakúdam*, the whole being held sacred and reserved by a 825 low wall round it to prevent cattle or children straying into 782 that space. The propitiation of serpents is deemed essential to the prosperity and well-being of every house-holder, and 753 periodical offerings are made to them, while the neglect of 776 these is considered to cause leprosy, sterility, or ophthalmia, among the members of the family. These serpents are therefore regarded as tutelary deities of the family, and the gods along with the shrines are conveyed with the property and frequently specified in deeds of transfer.

793 The high priest of the serpent cult is the Pámbu Mékkát 795 Nambuthiri, who lives in a house full of cobras which are said 778 to be harmless to his family. Whenever an image of a serpent 825 from a grove has to be removed from one place to another, he 782 is sent for on the belief that he alone can do it after due propitiation and offerings, and any tree that is cut down for this removal must be sent to the local temple to be used as fuel. 564 The serpent grove should not be polluted by a member of the 841 low caste, or by a woman during her menses; and when it is 783 so polluted or otherwise spoiled, a member of the family of the Nambuthiri priest has to be informed. He gazes into a 787 vessel filled with oil, points out the evil and suggests the remedy. The ninth asterism in every month is specially selected for 771 snake worship in Nayar families, when offerings of milk and 778 825 water are made to them. It is said that the approach of a woman during her menses will cause serpents to vacate the 841 grove because of the impurity, and Pulluvans are required to 782 sing songs and perform certain ceremonies to cause them to 532 re-enter the shrines. Images of these serpents are sometimes

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made even of gold or silver and consecrated for worship in 778
Brahman houses. They are also presented to Brahmans by 825
those on whose date of birth an eclipse falls, and this is done [532]
to mitigate the wrath of Ráhu.

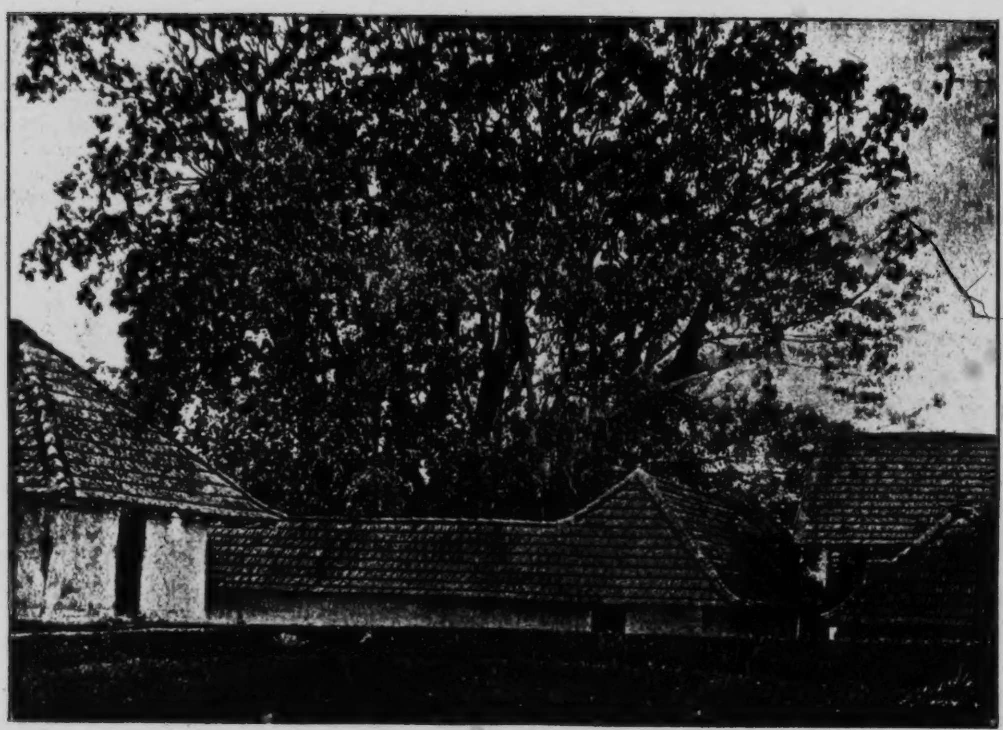
Cases of snake bite are of frequent occurrence in the 755
northern parts of the State where snakes abound; and nowhere 759
else is the Hindu treatment so skillfully practised as to effect
a radical cure by medicines and incantations. When informa- [787]
tion regarding snake bite isconveyed to a physician, or a bitten
man is taken to him, the latter can, by the chirping of a lizard
or other tokens, make out the nature of the case and also
whether it is curable or not. It is said that physicians should 755
not go to a patient's house, and the following story is given in 759
explanation :— 773

Once when the emperor Parikshit was ordained to be bitten by the great serpent Takshaka, the latter set out in the disguise of a Brahman. On his way he met another Brahman, who, on enquiry, turned out to be a physician on his way to cure the king. With a view to test his ability, Takshaka bit a tree which was at once reduced to ashes, but the physician removed the poison, and the tree regained its former state. Takshaka, admiring his ability, loaded him with immense wealth and dissuaded him from going to the king. He also made him promise that he should never volunteer his services
in such matters unless patients were taken to him. In some [428]
families the profession is hereditary, the most prominent among them beingt he families of Kokkára Nambuthiri and Máliyakal Karta.

Tutelary deities.

In every village are to be found guardian deities that pro- 776
tect the villagers from the malevolence of
demons which are supposed to occupy an in-
termediate place between gods and men. The temples of the [778]
Nayars in which are enshrined these village deities or *Gráma-dévatas* are far less imposing than those of the Brahmans and are callad *kávus*. The deities commonly represented are the consort of Siva or some manifestation of that female divinity, and Ayyappan or Sasta; and these are supposed to keep in subjection the demons and spirits which are ever prone to do harm to
the people of the village. Thus, though the demons are objects [782]
of worship, the propitiation of the guardian deities and the festivals held in their honour are considered to be sufficient to curb

[Facing p.83]



A TYPICAL KAVU.

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776 [782] the malignant propensities of those spirits. The most popular
of the festivals is the *Mandalam*, which begins on the first of
796 Vrischigam (middle of November) and lasts for forty-one days.
776 In addition to the daily *pújas* to the image of Bhagavati by
Brahman priests, special rites and ceremonies (*Kálameshuthum
Páttum*) are also performed by a particular class of Sudras to
the figure of the goddess made on the floor by means of
776 791 coloured powders, while the devotees sing songs in her praise
796 to the accompaniment of lute-like musical instruments. A
[534] man in a fantastic dress with an array of jingling bells round
[532] his loins, heavy sounding bell-metal anklets on each foot and a
scythe-shaped sword in his hand impersonates the goddess and
dances to the sound of tom-toms round the figure of the god-
[785] dess Bhadrakáli on the floor. The *Velichapád*, as he is called,
becomes highly excited and in his frenzy sometimes even cuts
[781] his forehead and causes it to bleed. He speaks, or rather the
deity speaks through him, in broken yet commanding tones
wholly unlike his own and makes oracular responses to the
enquiries addressed to him.

796 On a night in the latter part of the month of Dhanu (early
776 in January), a golden image of the goddess is placed on the back
[532] of a big decorated elephant, and, amidst the beating of drums,
[788] the firing of pop-guns and crackers, is taken out in procession.
The elephant with the goddess is supported on each side by
[231] elephants whose numbers vary according to the means of the
[791] villagers. The *Velichapád* is indispensable and is accompanied
by a group of well-dressed women and girls, each carrying in
her hand a plate (*tálam*) full of rice and a light placed on the
[782] top of it. The festival ends with a display of fire-works, and
the ceremony closes with the sacrifice of goats or fowls. On
the same principle but on different lines are celebrated various
propitiatory and sacrificial festivals in honour of the other
[782] aforesaid deities. Generally, after the harvests, the *Velicha-
páds* are taken out in procession to the Hindu houses in each
village to receive offerings of a measure of paddy and small
coins.

776 ***Sásta* or *Ayyappan*.**—According to Keralólpathi, Parasu-
778 rama with the object of protecting the newly created country
(Kérala) is said to have established many temples and dedicat-
[788] ed them to this deity. The most important of these is at
Sabarimala in the Chengannur Taluk of Travancore, which

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912

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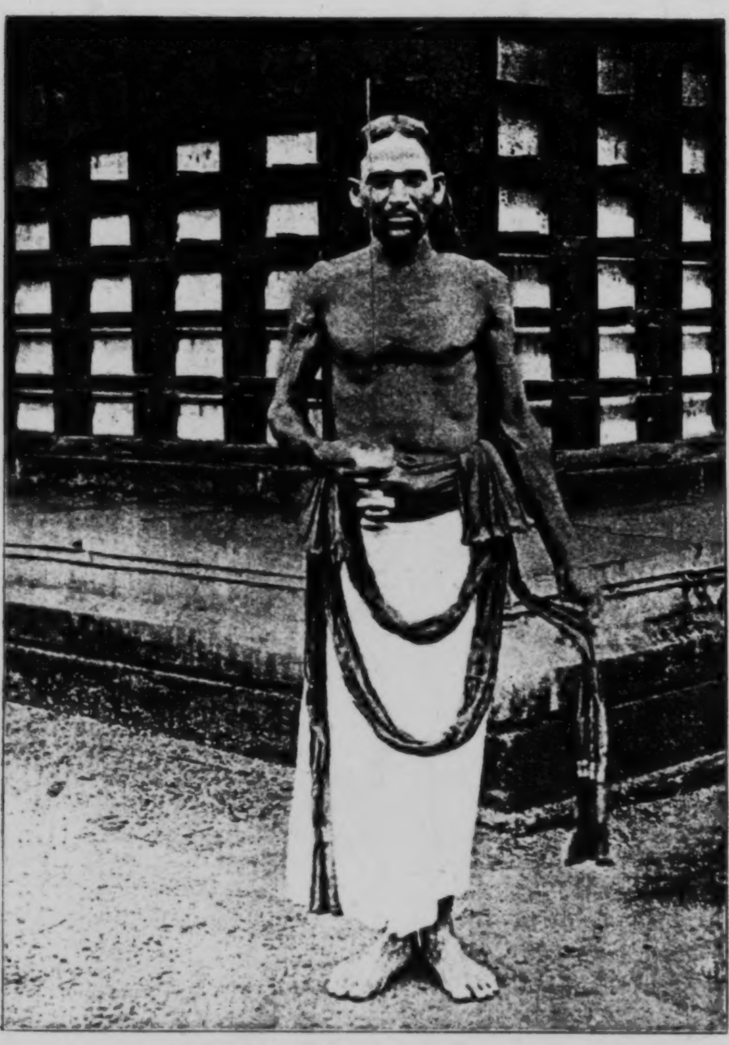
Nayar



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A VELICHAPADU

[facing p.84]

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attracts a very large number of pilgrims during the *Mandala* 778
púja from Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. This deity is [788]
peculiar to these parts, where he has the largest number of
worshippers.[1]

Demon worship.

The worship of the tutelary deities above described is to a 776
very great extent the outcome of a belief in, 771
and a constant fear of, the influence of demons
and evil spirits on mankind, a belief which has existed from a
very remote period. The worship of demons is confined to the
lower orders and has no connection with the higher forms of
Hinduism, and yet this belief in demons is so wide-spread that
not even the Brahmans are free from it. In every part of the
State, in Malabar and in Travancore, magicians and sorcerers,
from the highest Nambuthiri to the lowest Parayan, find employment in exorcising their baneful influences. Among the
Pánans, Mannáns and Parayans, magic, sorcery, and witchcraft
are a hereditary profession, and among the Nambuthiripáds of
Kallúr, Káttumatam, and Chennamangalam are to be found
special family deities by whose aid they are supposed to avert
the actions of demons and spirits. It is curious to note that [564]
there are exorcists even among Christians and Mussalmans; and [782]
another interesting fact in connection with this is that the high
caste Hindus exercise their magic influence by propitiating, by
the aid of their sacred *mantrams*, the more refined and sublime
manifestations of God, while the low caste-men propitiate Káli
in her more hideous aspects. The ordinary people make a 776
distinction between *Bhútas* on the one hand, and *Prétas* 775
and *Pisáchas* on the other. The former are regarded as the [766]
messenger of Siva and his consort Sakti, while the latter are
the souls of the departed who have died a violent and unnatural death by suicide, murder, or by drowning, and they are
believed to be demons who wander about inflicting injury upon
mankind in various ways. At noon and at midnight are the 775
chief hours when they attempt to seize or possess those who [787]
walk in lonely places or take shelter under tamarind trees or
on the sides of tanks. At night the demons are believed to
call loudly in order to allure people out of their homes into
distant jungles and there to kill them; hence, as a rule, at
night a call is not responded to until it is repeated a fourth

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[1] Vide Religion of the Izhuvans, Vol. I, page 313.

775 time. At the period of puberty and after child-birth women
[881] are especially liable to the attacks of these aërial beings.
[846] Charms and incantations, offerings and sacrifices, are the most
[789] requisite to counteract the evils that demons do, and iron
[782] rings, iron staffs, and leather shoes, are some of the specifics
that help to keep the demons at a distance.

They make their abode chiefly in the palmyra and *pála*
[787] trees, but some of them occupy even dwelling houses. Others
take the shape of human beings, while yet others possess
human beings.

775 Their name is legion, and they exist by the offerings of
782 their votaries and their tormented victims. Against the machinations of these demons, the sorcerers and exorcists bring to
[776] bear the influence of their special guardian deities who in turn
[791] must be propitiated with offerings before they can be called
upon to use their beneficial strength. In the case of the evil
[783] spirit of him who has died an unnatural death, a Brahman
magician purifies the spirit by means of certain ceremonies
called *Tilahóma* (an offering of sesamum seeds to *agni* or fire).
[789] A Chendus Nambuthiri presides at such ceremonies and transfers the spirit to an image of gold, silver, or wood which is
afterwards placed in a Vishnu temple or enshrined in a small
building put up for that purpose, there to rest in peace.

771 In the State, temples are dedicated to various demons,
346 the chief among them being the Avanangáttil Cháttan in
775 Triprayar. The temples dedicated to the small-pox demon
correspond to the *Péy Kóvils* or devil temples of the Tamil
[753] Districts. In these temples are to be found the instruments
[796] and symbols of demon worship, the dancing sticks or wands,
the priests' garments, tridents, etc., whilst in others there is
nothing save the images of demons. There is also an officiat-
793 ing priest, who is the devil driver and the devil dancer, and
791 who at times even becomes a *Velichapád* inspired to communicate to the votaries, who consult him in times of illness and
calamity, the wishes and intentions of that particular demon.

Worship of animals and plants.

771 To a Hindu all organic life is sacred, and his creed is
825 not to injure any living thing, while among
the animals worshipped by him the cow occupies the first place. The cow is *Kámadhénu*, the giver of all
things, and hence whenever a cow is approached, it is touched

9:Iyer E-4,5 (ca.1902-1906) 1912
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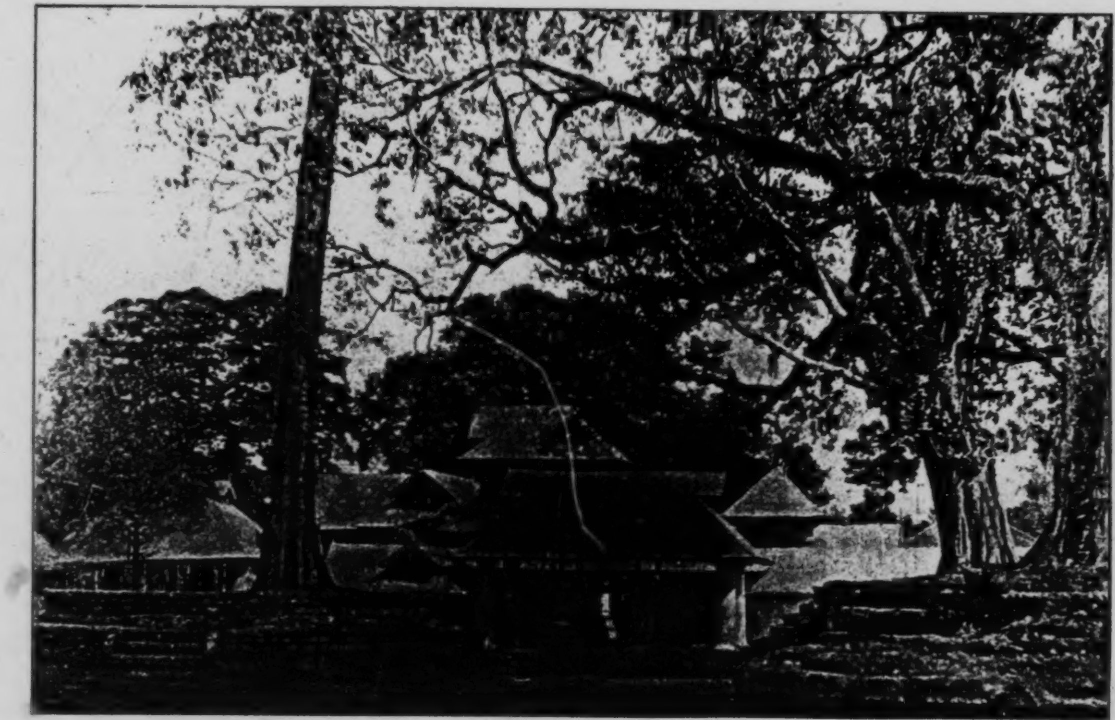
Nayar

[facing p. 86]



CRANGANORE BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE.

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with the hand which is, in token of veneration, then raised to 825
the head. Milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung are mixed toge-
ther and used for purificatory ceremonies; and the images of [237]
gods are anointed with this holy mixture called *panchagav-* [778]
yam. Small doses of it are even taken internally, and it is [755]
considered an antidote against poison, besides being prescribed
as a *prâyaschit* or expiation for offences against caste, whereas [778]
the sprinkling of water mixed with dung removes sin or pollu- [783]
tion from all persons, places, or things, and purifies them.
The bull, the vehicle of Siva, is also held sacred, and a statue [532]
of it in granite is either placed in front of the image of Siva [776]
or in a separate shrine, and is worshipped as a God. The
lizard associated with Siva, the monkey with Hanumán, the
Garuda (the brahmany kite) with Vishnu, and the peacock of
Subramania are a few of the other animals of Hindu veneration.

Of the birds of ill omen, one species of owl called *pullu* 825
is much dreaded because of the belief that it causes an illness 753
to children which results in emaciation. At the sound of its
screeching, children are taken into a room to avoid its injuri-
ous gaze. Various are the propitiatory ceremonies performed [782]
by specialists to secure its good-will and to prevent its do- [789]
ing harm to babies; and amulets are worn by children as a
preventive against its evil influences. Its hideous screeches
are always associated with death.

Among trees, some are worshipped while others are used 771
for *pújas* or sacrifices. Among the former may be mentioned 824
the pipal (Ficus religiosa), a tree which is held in veneration
by the Hindus. Persons afflicted with maladies or whose pla- [755]
nets are unfavourable, go round a pipal tree, seven, twelve,
forty-one, or one hundred and eight times, muttering prayers
and burning camphor and other incense at its foot or perchance
engage Brahmans to do so, in the belief, that it will cure
disease or counteract evil influences. The *vilva* (Ægle mar-
melos), whose leaf of triple form is supposed to represent the
three eyes of Siva, and symbolise his triple function of produc-
tion, destruction, and re-production, and the *tulsi* (Ocymum
sanctum), which is sacred to Vishnu, are also worshipped. In [778]
front of every house, generally on the eastern side, or in the
central yard of a quadrangular structure, is a stone or mud
altar, on which *tulsi* or the *vilva* is planted and watered every
day, and is worshipped by the inmates of the house. From

771 From
824 the *tulsi* are also made rosaries, which, in addition to being [778] an aid to prayers, are also used as ornaments for the neck. [301] Among the trees used for *pújas* or sacrifices are the sandal- [782] wood, the *pldsu* (Butea frondosa), the *rudráksham* (Elæocarpus lanceolatus), the *darbha* (Poa cynosuroides), the *karuka* (Agrostis linearis), the *thumba* (Leucas Indica), *chembarutti* (shoeflower, Hibiscus Rosa sinensis), *erikku* (Calotropis gigantea), *thechi* (Chrysanthemum), and the several species of lotus [278] and jessamine; and of these one and all are extensively used for medicinal purposes.

77
538 Folk-tales.

The belief in demons and the habit of attributing all that cannot be easily accounted for to supernatural powers, have built up an edifice of folk-tales that would prove of great interest to students of folk-lore, some of which are given below:—

539
[821] The eclipse is ascribed to the devouring of the sun or moon by the huge serpent Ráhu, and while it lasts, a kind of pollution is observed by the people, for during the period of eclipse, food and drink are supposed to acquire poisonous properties.

[775] People who hear stories of Rámáyana, while lying on their beds, will become blades of grass in their next birth.

[821] [825] [823] Will-o'-the-wisps are accounted for, as lights emitted by a kind of precious stone (*mánikka kallu*) from the mouths of serpents, which, owing to their long life, are believed to have acquired the art of flying. Popular belief is that some serpents have been blowing for ages upon gold, embedded in the strata of the earth, and converting it into precious stones of the nature above mentioned. They keep them in their mouths, and acquire the power of flying in the air, with the stones shining brilliantly when they open their mouths.

825
539 When the crow and the fowl were first created, they were asked which they preferred, personal beauty or long life. The fowl preferred the former, and the crow the latter. Hence it is that the crow is said to possess a long lease of life.

The crow is supposed to possess only one eye, though apparently it has two. One eye-ball is said to move first in one socket, then into the other as necessity requires. The story is connected with a strange myth.

During the exile of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, they 825
lived chiefly by hunting. One day, when Sita was drying some 539
pieces of flesh, a crow accidentally pecked at one of Sita's ruddy toes, taking it for one of the blood red pieces of meat. She thereupon told her husband about it, who shot an arrow at the crow and blinded it in one eye, and thenceforth its descendants have been blind in one eye.

When the great Rama was constructing the dam across the sea, for his large army to cross over to Lanka (Ceylon) to wage war with the *Asura*, Ravana, and to recover his wife Sita, a small squirrel was found working hard without food. This attracted the notice of the great Rama who took pity on him and gently rubbed him on the back with three fingers as a sign of affection, and the impressions thus left became the black and white lines, which the whole species possessed thereafter.

Ari-pravu or the common house-dove has a story told of it. These birds, male and female, are always found in pairs together. Once, it is said, they were quarrelling about a game, and the quarrel ended in the desertion by the male bird of his mate, who recognizing the mistake called for him, and her cries are said to be ever calling out for her mate.

Rain, Thunder and Lightning:—In the aërial regions are 539
huge monsters of extraordinary strength (*Kálaméghattanmár*) [821]
who are supposed to possess two horns with the aid of which [776]
all the water from the earth is drawn up during the summer,
to be spat out in the rainy season at Indra's (Rain God's) bidding. Lightning is caused by the friction of the horns, while engaged in the task of spitting out water. Another version of the story as to the origin of lightning is, that it is caused by the brandishing of Indra's sword, while engaged in ordering the monsters to supply the earth with water.

It is said that a new lobe grows on to the liver of a tiger [825]
every year it lives, and therefore by an examination of that [826]
organ, the age of the animal can be accurately determined.

Evil spirits are believed to have the power at times of [776]
changing men into tigers, such being distinguished by having [825]
no tails.

The claws and even the teeth of the tiger are used as [789]
charms against witchcraft and the evil-eye. They may fre- [825]
quently be seen set in silver, and worn round the necks of

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[789] children. Tiger's whiskers have also the same efficacy against
[825] demoniacal influence. The flesh is eaten as medicine, while
the skin boiled in gingelly oil and strained into the ear, re-
[757] moves deafness.

539 There is a common belief that, should the nest of a brah-
825 many kite be found, and one of the young ones be attached to
it by a string, the squall breaks away, generally leaving a por-
[789] tion of the line attached to the nest as it becomes strong. The nest which is formed of sticks should then be thrown into a running stream, when, if any of the sticks that compose it float against the current, they will, on being applied to any fetters, cause them immediately to fly into a thousand fragments.

[171] The owl which is an emblem of wisdom in Europe, and the goose that of stupidity, completely change their respective places in the east, the former becoming a symbol of stupidity, the latter that of wisdom.

[787] The hooting of the owl heard at night, has, in all parts of the world and in all ages, been considered ominous of
[763] evil, and is consequently much dreaded. In Cochin, it is generally believed, that the hooting of an owl betokens an impending calamity or even the death of an individual near whose abode its loathsome cry is heard; and so, dwellers in the neighbouring houses at once turn out and drive it away.

824 Jack-o'-lantern:—These are called *Kollykatta Pisachus*
539 (ghosts which emit fire from their mouths), and make their
[776] appearance on the side of tanks, rivers, and marshy places during rainy or foggy nights. They fly away or disappear at the sight of men and are much dreaded by the people.

Preëminent among the trees in the town of Cochin, and towering above all others along the sea-shore and sides of the back-water are the cocoanut palms (cocos nucifera linn), every portion of which, from the leaves to the roots, may be turned to some useful purpose.

[776] There is a tradition that the Raja of Benares, who was a strenuous worshipper of one supreme God, and rejected the custom
[643] of making offerings to inferior divinities, became, in course of time, almost equal to the Gods, and created many of the grains now in common use. As his powers increased, so did his ambition, and he meditated creating another species of human beings very superior to anything then existing in the world. But after he had completed its head, the demi-gods became alarmed and

prevailed on him to cease his work. The head was therefore 824
transformed into a cocoanut which was henceforth to be one 539
of the most useful of all trees in the vegetable kingdom, and
was dedicated to Ganésa, the patron of science and learning.

Funeral customs.

The Nayars generally burn their dead bodies, while those 764
of children under two or three years of age [766].
as well as those of persons who have died of
small-pox or cholera are buried. When a Nayar is at the point 763
of death, the members of the house-hold and friends who may
be present, one by one, pour into his mouth a few drops of
Ganges or other holy water or *kanji* water, from a tiny cup
made of a leaf or two of the *tulsi* plant. While doing this, [778]
they hold in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring and the [823]
water is supposed to touch the gold, before it enters the mouth
of the dying person. Sometimes, a *fanam* or gold piece is
placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed.

As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed 764
from the cot or bed and carried to the *vadakkini*, a room at [824]
the northern end of the house, where it is placed on long plantain
leaves spread out on the floor, and while it is there, a lamp
is kept burning both day and night. One member of the
family holds the head in his lap, while another the feet in the
same way, and here it is that the neighbours come to have a
last look at the dead. All the while, the names of gods or
sacred texts are loudly recited in the hope that the soul may
quit the world with recollections of God which would serve as a
passport to Heaven. Immediately death occurs, the members
of the house and the relatives assembled there burst out into
loud lamentations, announcing the sad event to the caste-men
of the village who attend at once. When preparations for the
funeral have been made, the dead body is carried to the *nadumittam*
or central yard of the house, or if there is no central
yard, to the front yard where it is again laid on plantain leaves.
It is then washed, anointed and neatly clothed, and the usual
marks of sandal-wood paste and ashes, as in life, are made.
The senior member of the deceased's family along with others
including the sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and all the relatives,
place new cotton cloths over the dead, and these are
used for tying up the corpse before being taken to the cremation
ground. Before removal, another ceremony called *Para* [804]
Nirakkuka (filling up *para*, a measure thrice the size of a gallon)

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[804] is performed. All the members of the family take part in this
[793] ceremony under the direction of the priest who belongs to the
Athikurussai class. The ceremony consists in filling up three
[564] *para* measures with paddy and one *edangali* of raw rice, and
placing them near the corpse together with a burning lamp of
local manufacture.

[351] A mango tree is cut, and as much fuel as is necessary for
the burning of the dead is collected and placed at the south-eastern
corner of the compound which is always set apart for
the burning or burial of the dead. A small pit about the size
of the dead body is dug. Across this are placed three long
stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end and one in the
middle, and on these the foundation of the pyre is laid. The
dead body which is placed on a bamboo bier is carried to the
cremation ground and placed on the pyre with its head to the
south, then fuel is laid over it, together with a little camphor,
613 sandal-wood and ghee, if the family can afford the expense. Before
764 the body is placed on the pyre, the *anandaravan*, the member
of the family immediately junior to the deceased, tears from
the new cloths laid on the corpse, a piece sufficient to go round
his own loins. He wears it round his waist and holds in his
hand or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron,
generally a long key. It must be noted here, that all those
members of the family who are older than the deceased may not
take any part whatsoever in the funeral ceremony or in any
subsequent ceremony after the cremation or burial, but all
adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the
[593] pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or in his
absence, his nephew (sister's son), sets fire to the pyre
[604] beginning at the head of the corpse; but if a son is left by the
deceased, he sets fire to the pyre beginning at the feet. In the
case of a woman, the son has to set fire to the pyre, or in his
absence, one junior in age to her has the right to do so. It is a
matter of great importance that the whole pyre should burn at
once, and great care towards that end is taken. While the
corpse is being consumed, all the members of the family go and
bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound of a
Nayar house). The eldest man who has the piece of cloth and
the key carries a pot of water, and all return to the place of
cremation. When the body is almost consumed by fire, the
senior member carries the pot of water thrice round it, letting

the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks 613
round. On completing the third round he dashes the pot on 764
the ground close to the spot where the head of the dead had
been placed. This circling round (*Kumbhapradakshinam*) is
said to symbolize that the deceased has had his ablution in the
water of the Ganges. Then the chief mourner and others
bathe in a tank or river, perform an ablution of water (*Udakakriya*)
to a piece of *karuka* grass stuck up to represent the
spirit of the dead. A small image of the deceased is then made [532]
out of raw rice, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly
seed are offered. When this has been done, the relatives
and the neighbours who have been there depart, taking care to
bathe themselves before entering their houses.

The ceremony next in importance is the *Séshakriya* (making 765
offerings to the deceased's spirit) which begins on the 782
second day after death and continues for seven days, the particulars 613
of which are as follows:—All the male members of the
family, junior to the deceased, bathe and return home. The
eldest of them who has the torn cloth and the piece of iron,
together with the others, assemble in the central court-yard of
the house, where there has been prepared by their *enangan*
Chíthayan, some boiled rice, a few gingelly seeds, a few leaves
of the *cherula*, some curd, and a small measure of paddy, rice,
and turmeric. All these are placed in the north-east corner
with a lamp locally made. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a
foot or so in length and the width of a finger is taken, one end
after being knotted, is placed in the ground, and the long end
is left sticking up. This leaf represents the deceased, and the
rice and other things are offered to it. The following is the 824
belief concerning the use of the palmyra leaf:—There are in 826
the human body ten humours, *Váyus, Pránan, Apánan, Samánan*, 764
Udánan, Vyánan, Nágan, Kúrman, Krikalan, Dévadathan 774
and *Dhananjayan*. There are *Desavayus* or ten airs.
When cremation was performed for the first time, all excepting
the last were consumed in the fire, while the last flew up and
settled on a palmyra leaf. This was discovered by some Brahman [789]
sages, who by means of *mantrams* forced it into the [775]
palmyra leaf. So it is thought that by making offerings to this
leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be pacified. 782

The place where the leaf is to be fixed is first cleaned carefully, 824
and the leaf is then placed in the centre of the prepared 765
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824
765 surface. The men, when they return from their baths, bring
782 with them some harialli grass (*karukapullu*); and making an
613 obeisance with the right knee on the ground, they spread
some grass near the strip of palmyra leaf, and rings made of the leaf are also worn by all those present. The eldest of the *anandaravans* or nephew then makes offerings of water, turmeric and leaves of the *cherula*, as well as balls of boiled rice with a few gingelly grains and curds poured over it. As boys are forbidden to make the offerings, should the nephew chance to be a boy, it is considered sufficient for him to touch one of the elders who, under those circumstances, makes the offerings. The whole is then covered with a plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved near it, and some milk is poured under the leaf. This is left undisturbed for some seconds, after which the leaf is tapped gently with the back of the fingers of the right hand; it is then removed and torn in two at its mid-rib, one piece being placed on either side of the *pindams*. And now the ceremony is over for the day. The agnates rise and remove their wet clothing, sometimes even bathe again. The torn cloth is tied round a pillar near the basket covering the leaf, and the leaf is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour for the performance of the ceremony. At the end of each day's ceremony the offerings of rice balls left are unguarded for a short time to allow the crows to feed on them; after which they are removed by the female members of the *tarawád*, who are junior to the deceased, and the eldest of them carries the offerings to the side of a tank
[825] and throws them into the water. It is believed that if the
[775] crows take them, the spirit is pleased. Should the crows leave
any remains, they must be thrown into the water, as dogs must
[231] not eat the offerings.

During the seven days the house of the deceased and all
765 its inmates are considered to be under pollution, and the mem-
783 bers of that *tarawád* may not go to any other house nor can
613 members of other *tarawáds* visit them without polluting them-
574 selves; but this pollution can be removed by bathing. During
this period, however, as a rule, the *káranavan* of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is at home on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Here it must be said, that in some cases, the visitors bring with them small presents in money or in kind to help the *káranavan* with the expenditure to which the funeral rites put him.

On the third day after the death, all those who are related to 765 the *tarawád* by matrimonial alliances combine and give a feast 613 to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours. This is called the *Patni kanji*. On the seventh day a return feast is given by the members of the *tarawád*, to all relations and neighbours. Between the seventh and the fourteenth day after death, no ceremonies are performed, but the members of the family are under pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes the *Sanchayanam*. It is the disposal of the calcined remains, the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the *tarawad* go to the place of cremation, and picking up the unburnt bones of the deceased, place them in an earthern pot which is sun-dried—not burnt in the usual way—and cover up the mouth of the pot with a piece of cloth. The eldest carries it and, followed by the rest, proceeds to the nearest river (it must be a running stream) into which it is thrown. In some places the bones [778] are collected on the seventh and preserved in a pot which, when convenient, is carried to Benares, Rameswaram, Gaya, or to Thirunelly in Wynad and there deposited as above described. Such a disposal is called *Ashtagaya-Sradham*, and puts an end to the need of all earthly ceremonies—nor is there any need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. The belief is [775] that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead gives peace to the departed spirit, which will not thereafter injure the living members of the *tarawád*.

On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony at which 765 a man of the *Attikurissi* clan officiates as priest. In the morn- 783 ing the members of the family wear cloths washed by a *Vélan* 613 (washerman) and assemble together for purification by the Na- 793 yar priest who throws on them, both before and after bathing, paddy, rice, gingelly seeds, and the holy mixture (milk, oil, etc.). The Elayad or the Brahman priest performs the *Punyáham* or purification of the house, well, etc., and on the sixteenth day he takes the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth day [431] and the morning of the sixteenth, the priests and the villagers are sumptuously fed, and presents of cloth are made to the latter and money to the former. In the Chittur Taluk, the priestly [604] functions are sometimes performed by the Elayad, and *Deeksha* [593] (leaving the body unshaved for forty-one days or a year) is observed by the nephew and the son of the deceased. The one 765 who is under this mark of mourning makes offerings of rice balls 613 [782]

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613 and gingelly seeds every morning after his bath to the departed
[782] spirit, and he must abstain from women, meat, alcoholic drinks,
and from chewing betel and tobacco. When the *Deeksha* is
observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described
above until the last day of *Deeksha*, the forty-first or the 365th
day after death. When *Deeksha* is observed for a year, the
ceremony called *bali* is performed every day. The last day of
Deeksha is one of festivity, and after *bali*, the man under *Deeksha*
769 is shaved. Then at the end of every year, the annual *Sradha*
or the commemorative rite is performed for the deceased.
[782] Rice ball offerings are made and given to the crows, when
[925] clapping of hands announces to these birds that the rice is
being thrown for them, and should they come and eat it, it is
considered that the spirit of the deceased is pleased with the
[613] offering and is not likely to be troublesome. But, on the other
hand, should they not come and eat it, it is evident that the
spirit is displeased and the *tarawád* had better be on the look
out. In the case of those who have committed suicide or met
766 death by violent means, the spirits are always particularly
775 vicious and troublesome to the *tarawád*, invariably rendering
613 miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless the spirits
782 are pacified, they will ruin the family, so a Brahman priest is
invited to satisfy them by means of *Tilahómam*, a rite in
which sacrificial fire is raised, and ghee and gingelly seeds
are among the offerings.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

Occupation.

Among the high caste Nayars, the recognition of caste by 564
occupation is not possible. They were at one 178
time a military caste, and as a relic of it, the small force of infantry maintained by the State is still known by the name of the ancient military caste of Kerala. Aristocratic military leaders of the feudal ages, who then derived their incomes chiefly from landed property, in these times of uninterrupted peace and tranquillity, are but shadows of their former state. Some of them are almost penniless, and while a few families maintain their ancient position, most of them have lost prestige and influence. Among the lower classes of Nayars, there are sub-castes who by occupation were potters, weavers, oil-mongers, and copper-smiths; but the men of these sub-castes have abandoned their traditional occupations, and even consider it a disgrace to be known by their original occupation. This is partly due to the acquisition of wealth by [555]
a number of the caste-men, and partly to their attempts to rise in the social scale by engaging themselves in other walks of life. There are again some classes (*Illakkars* or *Sudras*) of Nayars who rendered personal services to the Nambuthiris or to their own community, and the tendency has been to discontinue the services and take to other more respectable calling.

The Nayars numbered 1,11,837 at the last Census, and of 162
these, 28,786 are agriculturists. These include tenant farmers, [463]
agricultural labourers, growers of special products and those connected with agricultural training and forests. Very few [182]
take to manufacture and trade. The sentiments generated by the old feudalism, a rigid conservatism of caste and their residence in rural areas account for it to a great extent.

464 564 [212] The Nayars are the second in the list of the castes as regards learning, and only five per cent. of the population belong to the learned professions, but they are found in all departments of public service. The community is now availing itself largely of the benefits of modern education, and the members are fast becoming conspicuous in every walk of life. In every department of the State, in all the learned professions, they form a respectable majority, and the only people who successfully compete with them are the Brahman immigrants from the other coast. Though there are extensive landholders and substantial farmers among them, a very large majority of the caste-men are really very poor, being either petty farmers, agricultural labourers or day labourers, earning [357] wages at the rate of four to five annas a day. Even women of the poorer classes do agricultural work. Domestic servants in Hindu families are almost wholly Nayars, but none of them are artisans, weavers or potters.

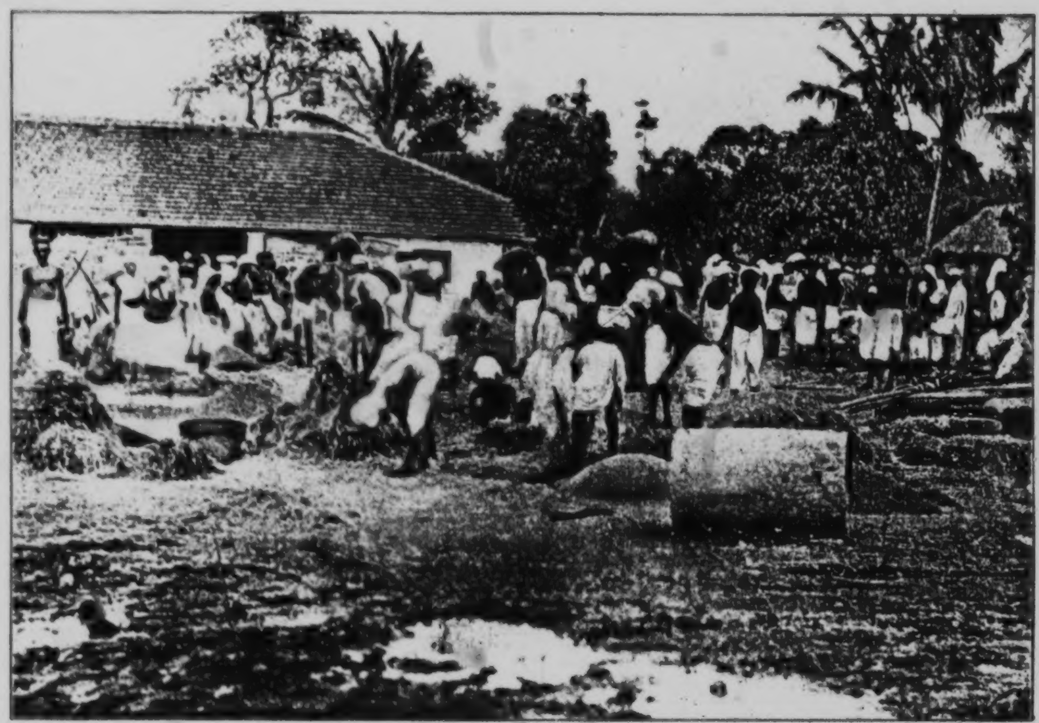
264 [575] [771] Food

The Nayars seldom eat before their bath or before worshipping in the temple close at hand. Their meals are generally three in number, namely, breakfast which is taken early in the morning, a midday meal between eleven and twelve, and another between seven and eight in the evening, but this meal is generally taken by children between 262 five and six. The breakfast usually consists of *kanji* or rice 264 gruel with some pickles and *pappadam* (round wafers made of the meal of the kidney-bean). Coffee is becoming popular [272] among the Nayars, and this beverage is now often taken for [556] breakfast in well-to-do families. They do not recognize any danger in the use of it, and individuals of all ages indulge in it, so much so that it is even given to young infants. The midday meal, which is usually served between eleven and twelve o'clock, consists of boiled rice together with a few vegetable curries; and butter-milk mixed with rice is the last course.

Their supper which usually consists of similar preparation [562] is taken between seven and eight at night. The women take their food after the male members of the family. Only a minority of Nayars are strict vegetarians, though there is no prohibition against their eating meat, fish or fowl.

252 556 [357] In large aristocratic families, Brahman cooks are engaged to prepare the meals, but the serving is in some cases done by the members. In other families, on the contrary, the cooks of

[Facing p.98]



NAYAR WOMEN THRESHING CORN.

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Nayar

the caste or the grown-up women cook and serve the food to 252 556
the inmates who sit in the dining hall with their own dishes
or with plantain leaves placed before them. In ordinary and
poor families the cooking and serving are done by women alone.

In grand festivities in which food is served to a large 574
number of the caste-men, the preparations are similar to those 564
served at Brahman feasts, a full account of which will be given 252
when I deal with them.

Social status.

The Nayars rank below the Ambalavásis and above the 564
polluting castes. Even among themselves
there are various grades of social precedence,
and the members of higher sub-castes do not freely mingle with
those of the lower. Men of the higher sub-castes may some- [264]
times eat with those of the lower, but their women never take
their meals with those lower to them in the social scale. It is [574]
curious to note that in grand feasts and on ceremonial occa- [796]
sions, good many formalities have to be observed in the [576]
allocation of seats in the dining hall for guests according to
their social status, and any violation of the caste rules or eti-
quette will end in their abruptly leaving the hall. The touch
of the Nayar pollutes the Brahmans, and they themselves in
turn are polluted by the touch of the low caste Sudras. The [262]
consumption of meat does not entail loss of caste, though
many abstain from eating it. They may take or drink water [271]
from the wells belonging either to their own caste or the three
castes above them. Elayathús are their priests, but sometimes [793]
their caste-men also officiate as such, and Nambuthiris give [783]
punnydham (holy water) to the Nayars under pollution. Being in close contact with the Brahmans, they learn to conduct themselves as the Brahmans do, and their morning and evening baths and their worship in temples are as punctual as those of the priestly class.

Dress.

Clothing is of considerable hygienic importance in the life 291
of a nation, and hygiène plays a considerable
part in the dress of a Nayar. A piece of cloth,
two to two-and-a-half yards long and one-and-a-half yards
broad, is worn round the loins. It must touch the ground or
very nearly so, and this method of wearing the cloth gives a
simplicity and dignity most suitable to their classic features.
A small upper garment is also worn while at home A Nayar [293]
always carries an umbrella while walking in the sun, but there
is no covering for the head.

291 is no covering for the head. This forms the costume of a
[292] large majority of them. On special occasions or when he goes
to public places, he has the same loin cloth, while a richer
cloth (*pávu mundu*), somewhat longer and broader, is worn over
[464] the upper part of the body. As has already been said, Nayars
[177] are to be found in all grades of public service, and these as well
as others wear a kind of a neat loin cloth, with a shirt and
coat together with a turban to cover the head, while others
more fashionable appear in European costume with turbans
instead of hats; others again wear hats as well, but their number is few. Among the poorer classes, the loin cloth is not
larger than a yard-and-a-half or two by three-fourth of a
yard.

302 The men shave their faces and bodies clean, leaving an
oval patch of hair on the top of the head, while some grow it
over a large surface of the head. In both cases, care is taken
to keep the tufts sufficiently long, smooth and oily, and this
[177] adds considerably to their neat and handsome appearance; but
it is becoming the fashion to crop the hair and to dress it in
the fashion of the Europeans.

291 The Nayar women wear an inner garment round the loins
and this is covered by an outer garment which is usually two-and-a-half yards in length and one-and-a-half yards in breadth.
Sometimes, instead of two cloths, one cloth sufficiently long for
the purpose is worn. The dress is white, and sufficiently decent to cover the lower part of the body, and a small upper cloth
serves as a covering above the waist. The Nayar women of the present day wear petticoats and cover the upper part of their body
[369] with a piece of cloth. It is curious to notice that this form of
[178] dress does not find favour (in the rural parts) with the Nambuthiris who are either their landlords or to whom they owe some
kind of allegiance or subordination. The absence of any covering for the bosom in ordinary female dress has drawn much
ridicule on the Nayars, and this custom has been much mis-
[548] understood by foreigners. So far from indicating immodesty,
it is looked upon by the people themselves in exactly the opposite light, for among them prostitutes only cover the breasts.
"A custom has in it nothing indecent when it is universal," as
[171] one of the travellers philosophically remarks (Dall). It is, in
[576] fact, a mark of disrespect to one's own elders and betters for
either a male or female of the Nayar caste, and of all castes

below it, to cover the upper part of the body, and traces of the 576
same custom can still be found among other Dravidian tribes, 291
some of them being people who are anything but uncivilized. [171]
The prohibition applies both to males and females. Men moreover
cannot wear caps, turbans or shoes, and must divest
themselves of these luxuries, when they meet their elders, even
though the meeting takes place in the middle of the road.
Until 1865, it was forbidden by law for women of the Chóvans
and of those of the lower castes to wear any clothing above the
loins. The present generation of Nayar women, except perhaps 291
the servants and the poor, have taken to the use of an 178
upper garment and petticoat, in the same way as the Nayar
males now freely use a second cloth. Young girls wear a piece [824]
of cloth round the loins, while those of four and five years of
age wear a small strip of cloth, or a piece of the bark of areca
palm. Generally young children of both sexes go about naked.

The subject of hair-dressing and personal adornment is 302
more psychological and ethnological than hygienic. The
Nayar women take special care in the growth and preservation
of their hair. They use a kind of medicinal oil to improve
its growth, and to keep it smooth and shiny. Many a young
woman's plait of hair reaches the knee or even lower, and this
adds greatly to her beauty. The hair is parted in the middle
and tied either tight to the ears or twisted up in front in a sort
of cone or sometimes tied into a knot behind.

Jewellery.

The Nayar women are fond of jewellery. They are no 301
doubt partial to gold, but unlike their Brahman
sisters they wear very few ornaments for
daily use. The oldest ornament of the Nayar lady is the *nágapatam*
or serpent's hood, so called from the shape of the pendant.
The ear-ornament is the *thóda*, which is a double convex disc,
the front surface of which is either plain or set with rubies, for
the wearing of which the ear-lobes are sufficiently dilated. This [304]
dilating process begins at a very early age, and the ear-lobes, in
the case of a majority of the women, become so far distended
as to make it possible to wear *thódas* of more than an inch
in diameter. The tendency at present is to wear small ones
which do not require much dilation. Then come the ornaments
for the nose which are *múkkuthi* and *nathu*. These do [178]
not find favour with the young women of these days, and what
is called the nose-screw set with a ruby has taken their place.

301 There are various ornaments for the neck, of which the one called ***addiyal*** is the commonest. Other ornaments for the neck are the so-called ***yanthram***, ***poothàli***, ***avil mála*** and ***pulinakham***. The latter is worn by children, and ***pálikka-***
[291] ***móthiram*** is the ornament which is worn by maidens. Gold and silver belts are worn round the loins. Grown-up women do not wear anklets, while the younger ones use ***káppu*** and ***golusu***. Rings of all kinds are worn on the fingers.

[pp 103 ff. not processed]

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Nayar

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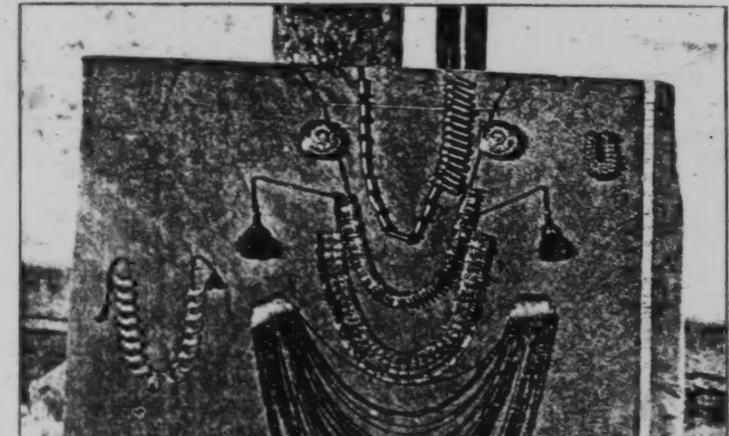

OLD ORNAMENTS OF NAYAR LADIES

[facing p.102]